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Edward II: England's Lost Saint?

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Abstract

The cult that arose around the posthumous memory of Edward II is currently recognised but dismissed as a brief, localised aberration, dependent upon external stimulus. The subsuming understandings required to support and project an image of Edward II as a saintly figure remain unexplored. Therefore, this thesis through a synthesis and analysis of literary and material sources, read against contemporary political, cultural and religious views, aims to identify the foundations of his alleged sanctity and assess the nature, scope and duration of his veneration.

This study contends that the idea of Edward II as a martyr developed three years after his death when it was announced that he had been murdered. The vital nucleus to this was the deeply acculturated belief in the inherent sanctity of an anointed king, catalysed into veneration by the abject horror of his murder. This conviction adopted a political dimension in retrospective criticism of the regime of Isabella and Mortimer, which had supplanted the rule of Edward II and usurped the rule of Edward III. The understanding of Edward II as a saintly figure who stood against the usurpation of God's order became quiescently embedded into the contemporary spiritual hierarchy, resulting in some evidence of it becoming overlooked (as perhaps in the *Luttrell Psalter*) or under evaluated.

This argument is explored through fresh interpretations, some re-dating and close readings of four literary pieces. The *Lament of Edward II* reveals a previously undetected analogy of Edward II as Boethius. The *Vita et Mors* is suggested as a hagiography for the king. *The Fieschi Letter* is considered as a piece of anti-English propaganda emanating from the Hundred Years War and *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II* is re-contextualised as a piece of propaganda possibly written or adapted to gain support for Bishop Despenser's crusade of 1383.

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My partner John, family and extended family have all been called upon to help in a variety of ways – proof reading, formatting and as critical voices and I have felt very fortunate to have been able to call upon their skills.

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Abbreviated References

BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BJRL	*Bulletin of John Rylands Library*
CPR	*Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward II - Richard II, 27 Vols. (London, 1894-1916).*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Foedera	*Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Acta Publica, vols. i, ii (London, 1816-20), ed. T. Rymer.*
PROME	*The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, ed. C. Given-Wilson et al. Internet version, at http://www.sd-editions.com.chain.Kent.ac.uk/PROME.*
Trans. B&G	*Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

Introduction

The life of King Edward II (1284-1327), his rule (1307-1327), sexuality, deposition, death and possible afterlife as a hermit are all active topics of historical debate. Yet there is no focussed study of his other afterlife, as a popular royal martyr saint of England. This thesis aims to redress that imbalance. The study of contemporary perceptions of Edward II, generated in the first decades after his death, is warranted by the current uncertainty of the extent or basis of the idea of him as a popular saint.[1] The apparently fragmentary evidences of his veneration, mostly relating to a small area of England around Gloucester (where his tomb lies) has permitted the view that his cult was localised, sporadic and therefore more of a temporary aberration, occasionally reignited by external factors, than an established acceptance. Therefore, this thesis by exploring the posthumous reputation of Edward II aims to determine the extent, duration and scope of his alleged sanctity.

The paucity of accepted evidence for the cult is compounded by the difficulty in establishing the nature of Edward II's alleged sanctity. Studies of medieval sanctity have led to a broadly accepted chronology of sanctity in which the cult of Edward II appears incongruous. Susan Ridyard's analysis of cults of pre-conquest royal saints concluded that the 'Norman invasion of 1066 destroyed for ever the political context within which those cults had been formed.'[2] Studies of post-Conquest English sanctity centre on the emergence of the political saint, defined by Simon Walker as 'men whose claim to sanctity rested initially, and more or less exclusively, on their violent deaths

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1 Philip Lindley, 'Worcester and Westminster: The Figure-Sculpture of Prince Arthur's Chapel' in Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales, Life, Death and Commemoration, eds., S. Gunn and L. Monkton (Woodbridge, 2009), 141-166 at 149, 'that most unlikely of candidates for canonisation'.
2 Susan Ridyard, The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge, 1988), 251.

in the course of a political conflict'.[3] The claim of sanctity for Edward II does not easily conform to this definition, for he did not die in the course of an obvious political conflict. Furthermore, Walker asserts that political saints are also distinguished by 'the degree to which their appearance marks a decisive break with the pre-Conquest past, in which sanctity was especially closely allied to the ruling dynasties of Anglo-Saxon England.'[4] The implication of this is that for Edward II to be considered a political saint this has to be substantiated despite his royal blood rather than because of it. Moreover, neither of the other categories of sainthood recognised by Walker (episcopal and mystical) affords any plausible alternative. Thus, the basic premise of Edward II's sainthood remains undetermined. However, the main thrust of this thesis also necessitates the identification of the characteristics of Edward II that were employed in constructions of him as a saintly figure. This in turn may reveal whether Edward II was considered a saint because he was a murdered monarch or if he was a political saint who happened to be a king.

Current overviews of the cult of Edward II are dismissive of its integrity. Such views are predicated upon the apparently sparse and disconnected evidence of the veneration of Edward II. In 1995 Walker determined that the cult was 'dependent on Royal encouragement, whether in the form of the substantial gifts made by Edward III and his family at the shrine in 1343 or in the determined campaign for his great-grandfather's canonisation launched by Richard II c.1385'.[5] His view appears confirmed in Seymour Phillips' recent, magisterial book on Edward II where he finds it 'hard to resist the conclusion that Edward II's cult flourished only in Gloucester and in

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[3] Simon Walker, 'Political Saints in Later Medieval England' in *The McFarlane Legacy*, eds. R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard (Stroud, 1995), 77-106 at 79.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84.

the mind of Richard II.'[6] It can be suggested that such influential opinions contribute towards a lack of recognition of material and artefacts that may relate to the cult of Edward II. This, in turn, discourages exploration of the small amount of material that is accepted as pertaining to the cult. An example of this is Danna Piroyansky's survey of 14th and 15th century English martyrs.[7] The cult of Edward II is included in the discussion but it is limited to a review of the secondary sources, informed by Walker's earlier perspective, which negatively directs the argument.[8] The opening premise of the deliberation, that there is a 'discrepancy' between the contemporary sources, which portray the cult as 'popular' and 'nation-wide' and 'the scarcity of evidence to support these claims', is not resolved.[9] Piroyansky does make the useful suggestion of the cult as 'linked to ideas on suffering, repentance and penance'.[10] Yet, her conclusion is that the cult 'failed to flourish' because 'it did not offer a message of harmony and concord for the English polity, an essential requirement for the survival of political cults at that time.'[11] The assertion of 'an essential requirement' is secured to Walker's writing, where it is found to be articulated rather more loosely.[12] This leaves the impression that rather than presenting a fresh analysis the author is re-iterating and amplifying previous negative conclusions.

As it stands, the cult of Edward II, although recognised by scholars, attracts little attention and the ideas that were employed to secure and promote it remain unexplored. Scholars now prioritise discussion of the competing

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[6] Seymour Phillips, *Edward II* (New Haven and London, 2010), 605.

[7] Donna Piroyansky, *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England* (New York, 2008).

[8] Ibid, 100-4, at 100, 'the cult was a regional phenomenon...[t]here was only slight opposition to the new *de facto* rulers – Isabella and Mortimer'.

[9] Ibid, 100.

[10] Ibid, 102.

[11] Ibid, 104.

[12] Ibid, n.35; Walker, 'Political Saints' at 91, '[t]heir success or failure as cults depended, in general terms, on the success or failure with which they did so'.

arguments over Edward II's possible survival, as suggested by the actions of Edward II's half-brother and apparently confirmed in the *Fieschi Letter*, over the cult.[13] Furthermore, no writer has considered what the building blocks of Edward II's supposed sanctity were, much beyond the suggestion that it was 'not uncommon for the deaths of great men to be followed by moves for their canonization'.[14] This is a significant omission for the identification of the arguments employed to fashion Edward II as saint like may reveal the motivations that lay behind the construction and indicate the impetus for his cult.

The research questions stem from the apparent paradox of a king deemed unworthy to rule but worthy of veneration. How did this king, despised enough to be deposed 'by the common counsel and assent of the prelates, earls, barons, and other nobles, and the whole community of the realm', come to be viewed as a saint?[15] What were the predicates for such a view and how was his sanctity formulated? How widely held was this view and how robust and enduring was this interpretation of Edward II? These questions will be explored through an analysis and synthesis of literary sources, read against contemporary political views. A close examination of the circumstances of Edward II from his deposition to his burial will be compared to the expectations of his treatment and the norms of royal death rituals. The extent, duration and penetration of the veneration will be assessed from both material and literary sources. Already recognised

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[13] Roy Martin Haines, *King Edward II: Edward of Caernarfon, his Life, his Reign, and its Aftermath, 1284-1330* (Montreal and London, 2003), devotes nineteen pages [219-38] to discussing the *Fieschi Letter*, which he suggests at 237 'is an element in the process of developing a cult', but less than half a page to other manifestations of the cult. Phillips, *Edward II*, takes seventeen pages [582-99] for his consideration of the *Fieschi Letter*, but covers the cult in less than six [600-06].

[14] Phillips, ibid, 600.

[15] B. Wilkinson, *Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216-1399*, ii, *Politics and the Constitution 1307-1399* (London, 1952), 172.

evidence of the cult will be explored and augmented by additional material in an attempt to knit these into a coherent account of a cult that, it is contended, originated in Gloucester but developed into a generally accepted veneration.

The premise is that Edward II's saintly reputation was forged from interpretations of the events that befell him between November 1326 and December 1327. In summary, these key events commenced in November 1326 when, following an invasion of England, he was captured by forces hostile to him, headed by his estranged wife, Isabella of France. In January 1327 his rule was terminated and his fourteen-year-old son, Edward III, pronounced king. On 21 September 1327 Edward II died in captivity at Berkeley Castle, nine months after the loss of the throne. At the time of his death, although Edward III had been crowned, royal authority was wielded by Queen Isabella and her foremost supporter Roger Mortimer. The former king was buried in St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester on 20 December 1327, three months after his death. His funeral ceremony incorporated the innovation of a specially made wooden effigy. In October 1330, by means of a coup, Edward III assumed personal rule and had Roger Mortimer executed for, amongst other things, the murder of his father. No charges were made against his mother and she was soon restored to favour; she outlived her husband by thirty years, dying in 1358. A cult arose around the memory of Edward II. In the last decade of the fourteenth century his great grandson Richard II, attempted to have him canonised.

The argument presented in this thesis is that the genesis of the veneration of Edward II lay in the official proclamation presented to the people after the deposition, which, for political reasons, reshaped the event as a voluntary abdication. This encouraged a view of Edward II as a benign monarch who

was prepared to sacrifice the crown to save his people from civil war. It also engendered expectations of honourable treatment for the former king. The handling of Edward II's death in prison was mismanaged both at the political and practical level. There was no official proclamation of the death and few of the customary rites associated with high status deaths. Without any suggestion to the contrary it had to be assumed that Edward II had died a bad death (intestate and without the last rites of confession, penance and absolution). This laid bare the discrepancy between the official projection and the actuality of the treatment of an anointed king. It also provided an unusual nine-month lacuna in the narrative of a king, one that could be imaginatively filled. Moreover, the uncontested bad death of Edward II may have provided encouragement for people to regard him as saint-like. For the only alternative to being eternally damned, for those who died without the last rites or a will, was to be a saint.

It can be argued that the flaws in the treatment of Edward II in the immediate aftermath of his death contributed to the strand of understanding premised on the belief that Edward II evaded his murder. Proponents of this argument hold that his murderers, to cover up their failure, substituted the body of a porter, killed during the king's escape, for that of the king and that this body was subsequently buried at Gloucester, as the king.[16] This version of events has led to debate, some of which centres on how the substitution was not discovered during the three months between death and burial. This becomes a particularly moot point as Adam Murimuth, a contemporary chronicler, claims that the body was displayed after death. Moreover, many writers contend that the body lay in state in St Peter's Abbey for eight weeks

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[16] For a summary of the arguments see: J. S. Hamilton, 'The Uncertain Death of Edward II?', *History Compass*, 6 (2008), 1264-78 at 1265-70.

before the burial.[17] However, a detailed study of the evidence allied with very practical considerations raises the question of whether the body was ever formally viewed after death. This thesis suggests that the effigy used in the burial ceremony was conceived as a solution to the problem of a body wrapped in lead while still at Berkeley. The idea that the body lay in state in St Peter's Gloucester is refuted. It will be suggested that the innovatory wooden effigy, displayed on a hearse during the funeral procession, was the reason why even people who had been present at the funeral ceremony were persuaded that the king still lived.

Three years after the death, it was announced that Edward II had been murdered. This appears a significant factor in structuring Edward II's death as martyrdom.[18] After this disclosure, Edward II could be constructed as a noble personage who gave up the crown for the sake of his son and his people in full acceptance that this would entail his own death at the hands of his enemies. In other words, Edward II voluntarily sacrificed his life for his people and therefore was a suitable candidate for veneration. Moreover, the lack of reference to the actual cause of death in the announcement of the murder provided the opportunity for the most lurid accounts of Edward II's death.[19] Some of these accounts accentuated the claim of martyrdom. Yet all the accounts of his death as a murder share a common feature, which is that the death is imagined without overt bodily damage. This is presumed to

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[17] For example, Ian Mortimer, 'The Death of Edward II in Berkeley Castle', *EHR*, 120 (2005), 1175-214 at 1181, 'The facts are that it was watched day and night by a number of men from 20 October, was carried on Abbot Thoky's carriage to Gloucester in procession, and then laid in state on a great hearse in the abbey for two months.'

[18] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84, 'In contrast to other 'political' cults, the inception of Edward's cult did not follow immediately on his internment; the prayers and offerings are said to have begun in the time of Abbot Wigmore, who was elected in 1329.'

[19] Haines, *Edward II*, 347, 'When the father of the present king was at Kenilworth by ordinance of the peers, to live in such a manner as appropriate, by accroachment to himself of royal power Mortimer had ordered that he should be removed to Berkeley Castle where by him and his men he was traitorously, feloniously and falsely murdered.'

be a strategy to account for why the murder had taken three years to be discovered.

Nonetheless, this deconstruction of how Edward II's supposed voluntary abdication and later murder could be interpreted to match the criteria of sainthood cannot wholly explain why a cult arose and gained acceptance. The dynamics that vitalised the cult of Edward II were ones of active opposition and passive condemnation. The opposition was focussed on Isabella of France, easily seen as rewarded for her sins of usurpation, cruelty, murder and infidelity with continued wealth and the warm regard of the king. The condemnation covered both Isabella and Roger Mortimer but, as he was already punished for his sins by a traitor's death, antipathy towards him, as a driver for the cult of Edward II, was less overt. It was this understanding that defined the nature of Edward II's sanctity; not only had he died by the hands of his enemies, they were also God's enemies because they had usurped the authority of one anointed king (Edward III) and killed another (Edward II). The killing of an anointed king was an abominable crime for which there was no mitigation. Moreover, the inherent criticism of the usurpation of Edward III's anointed sovereignty placed Edward II into an established model of sainthood now known as political saints (understood as a sanctity that incorporates criticism of the governance of the nation).[20]

In Walker's view, Edward II could not be considered a political saint because of the short period of the *de facto* rule of Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer.[21] Yet Walker misidentifies the regime that replaced Edward II as only lasting 'eighteen months' whereas it would be more accurate to say that

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[20] See: J. C. Russell, 'The Canonization of Opposition to the King in Angevin England', in *Haskins Anniversary Essays in Medieval History*, eds C. H. Taylor & J. L. La Monte, (Boston, 1929), 279-90; J. W. McKenna, 'Popular Canonisation as Political propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope', *Speculum*, 45 (1970), 608-23.

[21] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84.

it endured from 20 November 1326 to October 1330, a period of nearly four years.[22] Walker also assumes that the point at which Edward III overthrew the authority of Isabella and Mortimer was also the moment at which criticism of them would cease. However, Isabella's treatment of her husband after the deposition had already made her the subject of public criticism. Furthermore, although the list of indictments against Mortimer attempted to portray her as the innocent victim of his machinations this was implausible. It would be difficult to believe that Mortimer 'accroached royal power' and 'exacted prises in the realm as if he were king' without, at least, Isabella's tacit agreement.[23] Therefore, it appears that Isabella was tarred with a similar degree of calumny as Mortimer, magnified by the lack of overt penalisation, her gender and the close relationship she bore to her victims.

The contention is that the cult of Edward II, although stimulated by antipathy towards Isabella and reprobation of the usurpation of Edward III, developed into a veneration that focussed on the figure of Edward II. Edward's saintly identity became that of censor of those who usurped positions of authority. His accoutrements were his crown and the spit with which he had been murdered, underscoring the atrocity of the murder of an anointed king. It appears that this posthumous notion of Edward II was broadly known and accepted. This argument is grounded in the close reading of four literary pieces, which underpin and demonstrate the rationale of the thesis. These pieces are the *Lament of Edward II*, the *Vita et Mors Edwardi Secundi*, the *Fieschi Letter* and *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*.

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Haines, *Edward II*, 346, 347.

The earliest is probably the *Lament of Edward II*, known from two manuscript copies, in hands of the earlier part of the fourteenth century.[24] The argument is that this Anglo-Norman poem was created after the death of Edward II and following the overthrow of the regime of Isabella and Mortimer.[25] It is contended that this is a deliberate piece of propaganda designed to exonerate Isabella and blame Mortimer for all matters concerning the deposition and death of Edward II. The poem attempts to achieve these goals in a multi-layered creation, at the core of which lies a previously undetected analogy, that of Edward II as a contemporary Boethius. This interpretative device encourages the audience to perceive Isabella as Boethius' beloved wife, Rusticana. On another level, Isabella is suggested as the goddess Fortuna, blindly turning her wheel, transforming Edward from king to saint. This high status piece was probably written to smooth the path for Isabella's re-introduction to court, indicating the continuing criticism of her and promoting the notion that the rehabilitation of her reputation was of importance.

The *Vita et Mors* of Geoffrey Le Baker, written after the Black Death of 1348, is a Latin chronicle that unites the various strands of understanding which contributed to the perception of Edward II as a saint.[26] It inverts any understandings of Isabella's innocence afforded by the *Lament*, by portraying her as the primary motivator of Edward II's murder and relegating Mortimer's role to that of her lieutenant and lover. This narrative, by presenting Edward II's trials and tribulations in the time leading up to his death as a mirror of the 'Secret Passions' of Christ, performs as his

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[24] Longleat MS 26 f.76v and BL Royal MS 20 A II f.10.

[25] Claire Valente, 'The "Lament of Edward II": Religious Lyric, Political Propaganda', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 422-39 at 424, suggests that the poem was possibly 'written to support Edward III's coup of 1330'.

[26] Geoffrey Le Baker, 'Vita et Mors Edwardi Secundi', ed. William Stubbs, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, 2 Vols. (London, 1882-3), ii, 297-319.

hagiography.[27] Although William Stubbs regarded the *Vita et Mors* as 'only an extract' of a longer chronicle, there seems no convincing evidence for his assertion and this thesis holds, in accordance with Roy Martin Haines, that it was conceived as a stand-alone piece.[28]

The *Fieschi Letter* is ostensibly a copy of a letter written by Manuel de Fieschi, while he was a papal notary to Pope John XXII, to Edward III, sometime between 1329 and July 1343.[29] The authorship of the letter is challenged. It will be suggested that the *Fieschi Letter* is a piece of anti-English propaganda, composed in the form of a letter.[30] The apparent narrative of Edward II's escape from Berkeley Castle, sojourn at Corfe and travels to Ireland and Avignon before settling in Italy as a hermit conceals a critical assault on the character and rule of Edward III, particularly concerning his ambitions in France. The argument that the letter presents is that Edward II, as a reformed sinner and holy man, condemns both his son and his wife for their unexpiated sins. Isabella's sin is that of plotting to murder her husband and Edward III's is of allowing the execution of an innocent, his father's half-brother, Edmund, earl of Kent. The underpinning message is that Edward III is neither king of England (because his father still lives) nor king of France (because his mother, from whom his claim derived, is a would-be murderess). The significance of this document to a study of the

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[27] Roy Martin Haines, '*Edwardus Redivivus*: The "Afterlife" of Edward of Caernarvon', *Trans. B&G*, 114 (1996), 65-86 at 71, 'The account of Edward's ill-treatment at the hands of his gaolers could well be described as the 'passion' of the king – a literary device in vogue at the time.'

[28] Stubbs, Chronicles, ii, p.lix; R. M. Haines, *The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England: The Career of Adam Orleton* (Cambridge, 1978), 102-16.

[29] Only one copy of this letter is known: Montpellier, Archives departmentales d'Herault, G 1123, fol. 86r.

[30] The idea that this letter may have been a piece of anti-English propaganda was mooted by William Stubbs, in 1883 [*Chronicles*, ii, p.cviii], soon after the document's discovery. T. F. Tout, 'The Captivity and Death of Edward of Carnarvon', (Reprinted from *BJRL*, 6 (1920), 69-114) 39, offered a similar postulation, '[w]as it a cunning effort of some French enemies to discredit the conqueror of Crecy?'

cult of Edward II is that it encourages the view that the perception of Edward as a revered person had become so accepted that even without recourse to a grisly death he was understood as such. Furthermore, by invoking the image of Edward II as a suitable admonisher of king and nation, it intimates his saintly identity, as an icon against usurpers of God's ordained order.

Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II is usually thought to have been composed early in the reign of Edward II, around 1307-1308.[31] However, indicators within the text, such as in the third dream where Edward II meets the pope in Rome, given that the papacy had moved to Avignon in 1305 and did not return to Rome until 1377, gesture towards a later date of creation. Re-reading the poem as a *post mortem* construction, the importance of the saint's festivals that form part of the dating clause of each dream becomes apparent. These previously unconsidered signals can be seen as directing the understanding of each dream and suggest a narrative that centres on a specific crusade. On this basis, consideration is given to the possibility that the work was conceived or adapted to promote the crusading intent of Edward III in the 1330's. However, other signposts in the text, particularly in the non-dream narrative, lead to the contention that this piece was more likely to have been adapted, if not written, to gain support for Bishop Despenser's nationally sponsored 1383 crusade against the Avignon papacy of Clement VII. The association of the figure of Edward II with this particular crusade can be viewed as confirming his saintly identity, as scourge of usurpers. Just as he appears to be invoked in the *Fieschi Letter* to criticise his own usurpers, so it can be suggested he was emblematically employed in Despenser's campaign to condemn the usurping of Pope Urban VI of Rome by Pope Clement VII of Avignon. Moreover, an analysis of the portrayal of

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[31] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laudian misc. 622. O. F. Emerson, 'The Date of Adam Davy's "Dreams"', *The Modern Language Review*, 21 (1926), 187-89, *et al*. Haines, *Edward II*, 30, allows that '[t]he actual composition could have taken place at some other time.'

Edward II, chronologically written in the dreams, reveals the factors that were regarded as fundamental to the perception of him as saintly and prophesies the expectations of him as a saint in this crusade.

This study finds that the veneration of Edward II as a saintly figure existed independently of any actions by Edward III. It is posited that Edward III's relationship with the memory of his father was a complicated one; the natural respect and attention expected from a king to his immediate forbear was constrained by Edward II's saintly identity, which incorporated criticism of his mother.[32] Moreover, the political significance of his mother, as the source of his claim to the throne of France, rendered it expedient to hold her up as an estimable character.[33] Therefore, Edward III appears indifferent to the concept of his father as a saint, while still honouring his memory as a dutiful son.

It will be suggested that the tomb itself and the pilgrims it attracted combined to provide the locus for the cult development. Indirect evidence suggests a well-organised shrine management process on the part of the abbey, one that could only be justified by large numbers of visitors. Badges that may well be souvenirs of a pilgrimage to the tomb of Edward II have been found in London, Salisbury and King's Lynn. Books of the miracles of Edward II were still displayed in the abbey in 1455. On this basis, it seems that the Abbey of St Peter's and the town of Gloucester as a whole, benefitted financially from pilgrims visiting the tomb from soon after Edward II's death until the eve of the Reformation and possibly beyond. From this, it can be inferred that the story of his saintliness was acculturated into national

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[32] See: W. M. Ormrod, 'The personal religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 849-77 at 869-72.

[33] W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (New Haven and London, 2011), 125; Craig Taylor, 'Edward III and the Plantagenet Claim to the French Throne' in *The Age of Edward III*, ed., J. S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, 2001), 155-69.

understanding from the accounts of pilgrims and the miracles they were told or witnessed at the tomb.

This re-evaluation of the cult of Edward II questions the view of Richard II as seeking to re-vitalise a moribund cult to justify the canonisation of his great-grandfather.[34] Instead, it is proposed that Richard II was drawing upon a dynamic appreciation of his great-grandfather as the bane of those who usurped royal (and therefore God's) authority, as a dire warning to those who were attempting to restrict his royal rights. Even after Richard II's failed attempt to have Edward II canonised, the cult continued to have currency. The memory of his sanctity was evoked in the mid-fifteenth century to demonstrate God's revenge on usurpers, enacted upon the descendants of Roger Mortimer. This thesis holds that Edward II was accepted quiescently as a royal martyr saint, as his appearance in a line of royal martyrs on the early sixteenth century tomb of Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII, in Worcester Cathedral testifies.

This study divides into three sections, chronologically following the story of the transformation Edward II from king to saint, from deposition to death to cult figure. Each section starts with an exploration of the tangible evidence followed by a close reading of the literary source or sources that reflects and responds to those circumstances. Therefore, the analysis of the deposition and imprisonment of Edward II is presented as reflected in *The Lament of Edward II* and the *Fieschi Letter*. The detailed consideration of the period between the death and burial of Edward II is viewed through the *Vita et Mors*. The final section starts with a re-evaluation of the tomb and cult of

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[34] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84, 'Richard II vainly sought to revive enthusiasm for his veneration.'

Edward II, supported and complemented by a close reading of *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams About Edward II*.

Findings of this study will have relevance for both the study of medieval kingship and of politically sponsored sanctity. It is hoped that the case analysis of this political royal saint will contribute to broader understandings of the nature, purpose and function of interpretations of other individuals. At the primary level, this study, the focus of which is the first post-conquest king to both be deposed and regarded as a martyr, will afford fresh insights into how the acceptance of the removal from the throne of a king interacted with the contemporary perception of kingship as a divinely ordained function. The finding is that the sanctity of Edward II was contemporaneously constructed using notions common to the fund of ideas surrounding royal sanctity in the pre-Conquest period. The foremost of these was the concept that the killing of an anointed king was an atrocity that God himself would avenge.[35] It seems that the acculturation of this view, encapsulated in a canon of the legatine council held in England in 786, provided the foundation for the veneration of Edward II as the first post-conquest king openly declared to have been murdered.[36] Later descriptions of the monarch dying a martyr's death confirmed this as a legitimate basis for regarding Edward II as a saint.[37] Moreover, Janet Nelson in discussing early medieval king-saints identifies three common characteristics in that '[t]hey qualified for sainthood either through the act of renouncing the world, most spectacular in their case because they had the most to lose, or through self-subjection to

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[35] D. W. Rollason, 'The Cult of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 1-22 at 14.

[36] Ibid, 17.

[37] Paul Middleton, *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, 2011), 90, argues that the presence of 'martyrological concepts' derived from teachings on early Christian martyrs 'probably explains a readiness among the people to proclaim as martyrs heroes who had died in all kinds of circumstances'.

defeat and death'.[38] Edward II meets the first of these features in that the end of his rule was officially proclaimed as his voluntary renunciation of the throne. From this understanding it required little retrospective re-shaping to present Edward II as renouncing the world by choosing to abdicate in favour of his son and accepting perpetual imprisonment. The corollary of this understanding was that by renouncing the throne he prevented a civil war, thereby concording with the characteristic of 'self-subjection to defeat'. That he is also represented as knowing that these actions would result in his death fulfils the triumvirate of traits that Nelson discerns in early medieval saint-kings. The model of sanctity that most closely concords with the case of Edward II is one proposed by Catherine Cubitt, derived from her reappraisal of the cults of some Anglo-Saxon royal saints.[39] She suggests that these cults 'originated in lay and non-elite devotion to the innocent victims of unjust and violent death, before being taken up for political and other purposes.'[40] These findings dispute the demarcations of sanctity proposed by Ridyard and supported by Walker, suggesting that political sanctity, at least for royals, was more a process of continuity than change.

The restoration of the posthumous reputation of Edward II is of historical significance in itself. Beyond this, it can inform understandings of the actions and political positions of subsequent monarchs. This thesis will expose the complicated political situation of Edward III in relation to his mother, Isabella of France. It will be argued that the equivocal censure allotted to Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella by Edward III can best be explained through an appreciation of the political relevance of Isabella in relation to her son's claim to the throne of France. The new interpretation of the *Lament of Edward II*

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[38] Janet Nelson, 'Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship' in *Sanctity and Secularity*, Studies in Church History 10, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1973), 39-44 at 40.
[39] Catherine Cubitt, 'Sites and sanctity: revisiting the cult of murdered and martyred Anglo-Saxon royal saints' *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 53-83.
[40] Ibid, 53.

and a close reading of the *Fieschi Letter*, as a piece of anti-English propaganda, suggests her reputation to be a matter of consequence to both sides in the Hundred Years' War.

The thesis has a bearing on the current understandings of the motives and intentions of Richard II in applying for papal recognition of the sanctity of Edward II. The elucidation of the building blocks of Edward II's sanctity may nuance the idea that his deposition was a 'stigma' that Richard II was seeking to overwrite by canonisation and allow it to be seen as a multi-faceted event that could be employed either positively or negatively.[41] Moreover, the suggested disambiguation of *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*, possibly counters the notion that there was little public support for the sanctification of the murdered king.[42]

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[41] C. Given-Wilson, 'Richard II, Edward II, and the Lancastrian Inheritance', *EHR*, 109 (1994), 553-71 at 570.
[42] Ibid.

Chapter 1

Deposition and Imprisonment

When Queen Isabella invaded England in September 1326, her stated aim was to free her husband from the malign influence of the Despensers, Hugh the elder and more significantly Hugh the younger.[1] She promised not to do anything 'which will not be for the common profit of the land, save to destroy sir Hugh Despenser, our enemy and all the realm's'.[2] Quite at what point during the campaign the strategic aim moved on from the destruction of the Despensers to removing Edward II from the throne is not known.

Hugh Despenser, the elder, had been a courtier of Edward I and continued in this role under Edward II. He was even one of Edward III's godfathers.[3] His son, Hugh the younger, although he was officially never more than a chamberlain, was regarded as the successor of Gaveston in terms of the influence he wielded. He appeared to control the king and was accused of preventing the queen access to her husband. The Despensers' acquisitive rapacity became paramount following the contrariant uprising that had been provoked by Edward II's implacable championing of the Despensers.[4] The insurrection culminated in the battle of Boroughbridge on 16 March 1322 where Edward II was victorious. It was in the aftermath of this battle that

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[1] See: J. S. Hamilton, 'Despenser, Hugh, the elder, earl of Winchester (1261-1326)', (Oxford, 2004), online edn. Jan. 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7553>, accessed 18 Oct. 2012. J. S. Hamilton, 'Despenser, Hugh, the younger, first Lord Despenser (d.1326)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. Sept. 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7554>, accessed 18 Oct. 2012.

[2] *The Anonimalle Chronicle 1307 to 1334: From Brotherton Collection MS 29*, ed. and trans., Wendy Childs and John Taylor (Leeds, 1991), 126-7, 'chose qe ne serra pur le commun profist de la terre, sauve a destruire sire Hugh le Despenser nostre enemie et a tote le roialme'.

[3] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 7.

[4] *Anonimalle*, 31. For a detailed account of the Despenser's 'spoils of power' see: Natalie Fryde, *The tyranny and fall of Edward II 1321-1326* (Cambridge, 1979), 106-18.

Thomas, earl of Lancaster, leader of the opposition, cousin of Edward II and uncle of Queen Isabella was executed, along with several other nobles.[5] The property of all contrariants whether killed in battle, executed or imprisoned became forfeit and their spouses and children were confined at the king's pleasure.[6] Much of the forfeited property and land was passed to the Despensers. Beyond this, the Despensers continued to prosecute their ambitions by 'despoiling particularly vulnerable heirs' of the contrariants.[7] Even Queen Isabella does not appear immune to their avarice and ambition. According to a contemporary chronicler, she felt a personal antipathy towards Hugh the younger, 'through whom her uncle perished, by whom she was deprived of her servants and dispossessed of all her rents'.[8]

Isabella had left England in March 1325, at the behest of Edward II, to negotiate peace terms with her brother the king of France, following the escalation of hostilities in the wake of the war of Saint-Sardos of 1324-25.[9] The war of Saint-Sardos was a manifestation of the tensions that existed over the duchy of Gascony, held by England under the overlordship of France. France had been pressing Edward II to perform homage to the new king (Charles IV) since July 1323.[10] Edward II's delaying of this matter had led to increasing antagonism. However, as a result of Isabella's negotiations it was accepted that Edward II's son could perform the homage in his father's stead. Therefore, the future Edward III, having been invested as duke of Aquitaine, joined his mother on 22 September 1325 and performed

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[5] Phillips, *Edward II*, 412-13.
[6] Ibid, 413.
[7] Fryde, *tyranny*, 107.
[8] *Vita Edwardi Secundi: the life of Edward II*, ed. and trans., Wendy Childs (Oxford, 2005), 229.
[9] Phillips, *Edward II*, 461-71 at 466, The escalations continued while Isabella was in France; on 18 September 1325 'Isabella's English lands were taken into royal hands' followed by the arrest of all French subjects living in England, including members of Isabella's household.
[10] Ibid, 455-7.

the required ceremony.[11] Thereafter Isabella refused to return to England. Isabella's initial reason for refusing to return focussed on the poor state of her marriage rather than the fundamental problems in the governance of England. She is reported to have told a messenger of Edward II's, bidding her to return to England:

> I feel that marriage is a union of a man and a woman,
> holding fast to the practice of a life together, and that
> someone has come between my husband and myself
> and is trying to break this bond; I declare that I will
> not return until this intruder is removed, but,
> discarding my marriage garment, shall put on the
> robes of widowhood and mourning until I am avenged
> of this Pharisee.[12]

The 'Pharisee' was undoubtedly Hugh Despenser, the younger.

Despite this assertion, Isabella, while in France, sometime around December 1325, became irrevocably involved with Roger Mortimer of Wigmore. He was a leading contrariant who had escaped from the Tower of London, having been sentenced to life imprisonment after Edward's victory at the battle of Boroughbridge.[13] Notwithstanding this, Isabella continued to portray herself as a wronged and grieving wife. In February 1326, she responded to the archbishop of Canterbury, who had written to her begging her to return to England. She said that she would not have left her 'beloved and sweet lord and friend, without very grave and justifiable cause' and that this cause was Hugh Despenser the younger. Despenser, she claimed, 'governs our lord and his entire kingdom' and even that he represented a personal threat to her

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[11] Ibid, 479, the investiture took place on 10 September 1325, the act of homage was made on 24 September.
[12] Childs, *Vita*, 243.
[13] For Roger Mortimer's life and career see: R. R. Davies 'Mortimer, Roger (V), first earl of March (1287-1330)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. Jan. 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articles/19354> accessed 13 Oct. 2012.

life.[14] Edward II repudiated Isabella's claims and intimated that it was her association with Roger Mortimer that lay behind her refusal to return. A contemporary chronicler records the king as saying 'I firmly believe that the queen has been led into this error at the suggestion of someone else and, in truth, whoever he may be he is a man who is wicked and an enemy.'[15]

As tensions increased, with Edward II appealing to the pope and Isabella's brother to press Isabella and particularly his heir to return to England, his queen's intentions turned to invasion. Isabella's strategy to raise support for an armed return to England was to betroth the future Edward III to the count of Hainault's daughter, Philippa. In return, the count provided troops and his brother to lead them. The invasion force, numbering between 1,000 and 1,500 men (made up of Hainault troops, mercenaries paid by the count of Hainault and disaffected English exiles), landed in Suffolk on 24 September 1326.[16] Her son, Edward II's half brother Edmund, earl of Kent, his wife and Roger Mortimer, accompanied Isabella. Edward II's long planned defence to the expected invasion melted away; as Phillips states 'Isabella's advance appears to have met no resistance' and 'supporters flocked to her, united by their common hatred of the Despensers.'[17] Isabella also wrote two open letters to the English people during the early days of her invasion, 'announcing her arrival; her status as queen of England and the presence of her son, the heir to the throne'. These, Phillips argues, made it 'much easier for anyone with a grievance against Edward II and the Despensers to join Isabella without appearing to commit an act of treason.'[18] A further proclamation of her intentions was given in mid October, by Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, which reiterated that her objective was the elimination of

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[14] Phillips, *Edward II*, 491.
[15] *Vita*, 245.
[16] Phillips, *Edward II*, 501.
[17] Ibid, 504.
[18] Ibid.

Despenser the younger as the king's adviser.[19] As Haines says, 'Edward himself incurs no criticism at this stage; he is more a victim. The proclamation is careful to delineate the oppressions suffered by all estates of the realm: the king, the Church, the barons, the people.'[20] Such propaganda, appealing to all levels and institutions of society, supported the perception of Isabella as the champion of all that was right and good and Despenser the younger as the embodiment of universal evil.

Faced by widespread antipathy and the increasing volatility of the people of London, Edward II fled London on 2 October, accompanied by the Despensers.[21] Hugh the elder was charged with holding Bristol for the king while Hugh the younger and Edward II took to sea at Chepstow, with the probable intent of reaching Ireland.[22] Bristol fell to Isabella by 26 October at which time Edward II, having faced adverse weather at sea, had been forced to land at Cardiff. On 27 October, Hugh Despenser the elder was sentenced to death and executed at Bristol. Edward II and Hugh Despenser the younger were captured in Wales on 16 November. Hugh the younger was executed at Hereford on 24 November. With the deaths of the Despensers Isabella had achieved her stated objective, which the English people appear to have supported; however, she had no mandate for any further action against Edward II.

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[19] See: Haines, *Edward II*, 180, for a summary and translation of the proclamation.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Phillips, *Edward II*, 505-6, describes London as 'seething with discontent', which on 9 October, after receipt of Isabella's second open letter, erupted into revolt as '[t]he Londoners... deeply hated Despenser for his attacks on their liberties since 1321...were already sympathetic towards Mortimer [and] needed no further encouragement.'
[22] Ibid, 510-12. See also: Paul Dryburgh, 'The Last Refuge of a Scoundrel? Edward II and Ireland, 1321-7' in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, eds. G. Dodd and A. Musson (Woodbridge, 2006), 119-39.

The precise chronology of the events leading up to the end of the rule of Edward II, after his capture in Wales, is confused and probably deliberately obfuscated by the new regime to produce an illusion of legitimacy and regard for due process. Even before his capture, his authority had been usurped. On 28 October, a summons was issued, in the name of the future Edward III, for a parliament to be held at Westminster on 14 December.[23] The authority to make such a summons was based in the argument that Edward II, having quit England, had left the country without government and therefore his son was stepping up as 'guardian of the kingdom' during his father's absence.[24] However, apart from the four days at sea, Edward II had not left the kingdom and after his capture, he was swiftly returned to England, becoming a prisoner in the earl of Leicester's castle of Kenilworth, by early December.[25] Whatever the intentions had been for the parliament summoned for 14 December this was prorogued on 3 December until 7 January 1327, but not by Edward II but in the name of his son.[26] Moreover, soon after his capture, Edward II had been deprived of his Great Seal, which was passed to the charge of Isabella and her son.[27]

It can be suggested that the seizure of Edward II marks a watershed in the understanding of this monarch. After his capture, it can be argued, he lost all self-determination and authority.[28] He was never again seen in public and deprived of representation. From the surviving evidence, this is the point at which he, as the legitimate monarch, ceased to be an independently functioning entity. Thereafter he becomes the embodiment of an idea whose

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[23] Phillips, *Edward II*, 513.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid, 518.
[26] Ibid, 513, n.355.
[27] Ibid, 515.
[28] Ibid, 514, 'his last recorded act as a free man' on 10 November, was to send messages to Isabella, whom he addressed as 'his most beloved consort', and Edward his son 'on business especially concerning him and his kingdom'.

shape and style was delineated by others, whose reported actions, words and emotions cannot be validated. The inference that is drawn from this is, that while those in control of the king initially had more authority for their projections of him once he was dead their authority was negated and could be supplanted by other interpretations and conceptions.

Parliament, although the use of this term for such an assemblage without the king is problematic, convened on 7 January 1327.[29] It was not until 12 January that it was reported to those assembled that Edward II had refused 'rather forcefully' to attend, 'saying that he did not wish to venture among enemies and traitors'.[30] The delay in the reporting of this news indicates that those who travelled to Kenilworth to ask Edward II to attend, (Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford and either the bishop of London or Winchester) did not set off on their mission in enough time to permit Edward's attendance on the stated day.[31] Moreover, given that Adam Orleton 'was one of Isabella's most important allies' and it is hard to imagine that the appearance of the king would have furthered Isabella's intentions, the plausibility of a request for his attendance has to be queried.[32] Overriding these considerations is that Edward II was a prisoner and therefore it is difficult to believe that he would have had any choice as to whether he would attend or not. It may not be too cynical to suggest that the report of Edward's intransigence was a deliberate ploy, intended to perform as the necessary start of the character assassination of Edward II. For in his allegedly forceful refusal to attend

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[29] See: Gwilym Dodd, 'Parliament and Political Legitimacy in the Reign of Edward II', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, eds. G. Dodd and A. Musson (Woodbridge, 2006), 165-89, for a consideration of the role and prerogatives of parliament in the reign of Edward II.

[30] Claire Valente, 'The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II', *EHR*, 113 (1998), 852-81, at 855; Phillips, *Edward II*, 525.

[31] See: Valente, ibid, for estimations of the time this journey would have taken.

[32] Ibid.

parliament, Edward II could be constructed as showing contempt for all the estates of his realm.

Whether Edward II's refusal to attend was genuine or not the announcement of this was immediately used by Adam Orleton to preface a speech that further blackened Edward's reputation in that he 'described the Queen's fear of her husband' before raising the suggestion that Edward II should be replaced by his son.[33] Orleton said that Edward II 'carried a knife in his hose to kill queen Isabella and that if he had no other weapon he would crush her with his teeth'.[34] The concatenation of these two images of Edward II, the first picturing him as a king who has no regard for his people and the second that he actively wanted to kill the woman whom they regarded as their deliverer, cannot but have helped shift the perception of him, from victim of Despenser's guile to arrogant evil-doer. Yet despite this potent mix of anti-Edward propaganda, agreement to the deposition was not immediately forthcoming and the meeting was adjourned until the following afternoon.

The details of what actually happened when parliament reassembled are obscure but 'virtually every chronicle' states that 13 January 1327 was the date on which it was agreed that Edward II would no longer be king and that his son should be crowned in his stead.[35] Chronicle accounts refer to speeches and sermons made, in turn by; Roger Mortimer, Adam Orleton (bishop of Hereford), John Stratford (bishop of Winchester) and Walter Reynolds (archbishop of Canterbury).[36] Roger Mortimer, who first addressed

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[33] Ibid, 855; Haines, *Edward II*, 187, traces the queen's fear that her husband would kill her back to a statement made by Adam Orleton during Christmas 1326 at which time he alleged that Isabella had expressed these fears in a letter, sent from Paris on 5 February 1326.
[34] Phillips, *Edward II*, 521, Adam Orleton later denied using these words 'admitting only to saying that Edward's anger was increased by Despenser's death.'
[35] Valente, 'Deposition', 859.
[36] Ibid, 858.

the assembly, informed them of 'what had been ordained' and 'agreed among the magnates', between the previous day's assembly and the current one, which was that Edward II was to be deposed and replaced by his son.[37] He and each subsequent speaker then referred to a document that listed six failings of Edward II, later incorporated into the *Forma deposicionis Regis Edwardi post Conquestum Secundi*.[38] The list of failings concluded with the assertion that Edward II had

> stripped his realm and his people, and what is
> worse, by his cruelty and lack of character he
> has shown himself incorrigible without hope
> of amendment, which things are so notorious
> that they cannot be denied.[39]

The claim that Edward's crimes were 'notorious' denied him the right to respond to the charge, based upon the understanding 'that notorious offences require no proof and admit no defence'.[40] In this Edward II was treated in the same manner as his cousin (and his queen's uncle) Thomas, earl of Lancaster, who had been executed after the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322.[41]

The last of the speakers on 13 January 1327 was the archbishop of Canterbury, Walter Reynolds. He chose as the motif of his oration the proverb 'the voice of the people is the voice of God' (vox populi, vox Dei) and

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[37] Ibid, 856.
[38] There is no known autograph document of the *Forma deposicionis Regis Edwardi Anglie post Conquestum Secundi*. Fryde, *Tyranny* at 233-5, offers a transcription of a Latin version from 'a chronicle, probably from Canterbury, now Trinity College, Cambridge, Ms., R.5.41 fs. 125r, 125v, 126r.' Valente, Ibid, 878-81, along with a discussion of other versions, transcribes an Anglo-Norman version from 'Winchester Cathedral Archives, Winchester Cartulary, no.234, fos. 5v-6:*'.
[39] H. F. Hutchinson, *Edward II: The Pliant King* (London, 1971), 170.
[40] Valente, 'Deposition', 859, n.1.
[41] Silence in the face of accusations, whether voluntarily or enforced, is a common feature of martyrs, stemming from Christ's silence in response the charges made against him, see: Matthew 27: 62-63.

after he had finished, he repeated the call for the consent of the people to the replacement of Edward II by Edward III.[42] This, after the lengthy verbal lambasting of Edward II, gained the semblance of agreement from the assembled people. However, as some chronicles point out, the people summoned to the parliament were 'reinforced and intimidated' by crowds of Londoners, hostile to Edward II and independently pressing for his removal.[43] Despite this, the archbishop of York, William Melton and the bishops of London, Rochester and Carlisle withheld their assent. Thereafter a second deputation was sent to the king at Kenilworth to withdraw homage and formally end his reign. This deputation did not leave Westminster until the '15 or 16 January' and therefore the withdrawal of homage 'probably took place on 20 or 21 January'.[44]

Despite having gained the appearance of consent for the act of deposition in a type of parliamentary meeting, aided and abetted by the people of London, this required explaining to the population at large. Furthermore, this explanation needed to present the situation in a manner that would minimise the risk of exciting organised support for Edward II.[45] To this end, the *Forma deposicionis* was extended from the six articles of complaint to become a narrative that re-worked the events of January 1327, shaping them from deposition to abdication. As Claire Valente convincingly argues, 'a deposition

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[42] Valente, 'Deposition', 859.

[43] Ibid; Phillips, *Edward II*, 526, quotes from the *Calendar of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London*, that the Londoners swore allegiance to Isabella and her son and asked the prelates and magnates 'to crown the latter [Edward III], and to depose his father for frequent offences against his oath and his Crown.'

[44] Valente, 'Deposition', 860.

[45] The greatest perceived threat would have been an alliance of English and Welsh oppositional factions with the Scots. See: Phillips, *Edward II*, 537, where he details the numbers of knights, burgesses and abbots that refused to take the oath promising allegiance to Isabella and her son. He also specifies those who either refused the summons to parliament or were not invited. These details suggest that the deposition was not a unanimously accepted proposal and that there was continuing support for Edward II as king.

did take place, but...some contemporaries reinvented it as an abdication'.[46] In essence, it is very likely that the *Forma deposicionis,* which was the 'product of the circle of Isabella and Mortimer', was intended to become the 'official' record of the deposition.[47] There is no surviving evidence of this document ever being enrolled.[48] However, the parliamentary roll for this period has no record of anything concerning the end of the rule of Edward II.[49]

The main difference between the account offered by the *Forma deposicionis* and what can be deduced from other sources is that the *Forma* records only one visit to Edward II at Kenilworth, the visit reported to parliament on 12 January. The *Forma* represents this visit, not as a request to attend parliament but as when he was presented 'with a reasonable exposition of the evils of his governance, indicating to him that the prelates and nobles would like to place his son on the throne, if he agreed'.[50] The *Forma* indicates that Edward II acceded to this suggestion and abdicated sometime before 12 January and therefore the parliamentary meeting of 13 January did not depose him but instead accepted his abdication. In this, the *Forma* reorders the chronology of the events of January 1327, placing the resignation of the crown before the deposition of 13 January.[51] Implicit in the *Forma* is the suggestion that Edward II, having recognised his own shortcomings as presented to him at Kenilworth realised that he was an unworthy king and actively wanted his son to take the crown. The *Forma* shapes Edward II's agreement as the determining factor in ending his reign.

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[46] Valente, 'Deposition', 853.
[47] Ibid, 871.
[48] Ibid, 873-5; Phillips, *Edward II*, 526, n.36, argues that '[a]n official version of the articles apparently existed in the time of Richard II, when it was used by his opponents in 1386-7, and was probably destroyed by Richard after his coup of 1397'.
[49] Phillips, ibid, 526.
[50] Valente, 'Deposition', 873.
[51] Ibid.

This notion of abdication rather than deposition was officially promulgated in the earliest announcement of the king's peace (*De pace Regis proclamanda*) of Edward III on the 25 January 1327.[52] This recorded that,

> Whereas Sire Edward, recently king of England, of his
> free will and by the common counsel and assent of the
> prelates, earls, barons, and other nobles, and of the
> whole community of the realm, has abdicated the
> government of the realm; and whereas he has
> granted and wills that the government of the realm
> should devolve upon his eldest son and heir... [53]

Although this proclamation of the King's peace could be regarded as following the precedent set in the previous two reigns this was soon followed by an innovatory second announcement, the *pace publicanda*.[54] This, a more nuanced version of events, was presented to the population by the accepted

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[52] *Foedera*, II, ii, 683. The proclamation of the new king's peace was seen as necessary to resecure the laws of the land under the jurisdiction of the new king, because the king's peace was viewed as specific to the individual rather than to the abstraction of an enduring monarchy, see: J. K. Weber, 'The King's Peace: A Comparative Study', *The Journal of Legal History*, 10 (1989), 135-60. *Foedera*, I, ii, 497, records the earliest proclamation of the King's Peace, that of Edward I, given at Westminster on the 23 November 1272, a week after his father's death, and three days after his rule was deemed to have commenced. Edward I was away on crusade at this time and therefore it appears that it was this constitutional difficulty that precipitated an official proclamation of his peace. The key features of his *proclamanda* are that the throne was claimed by hereditary right of descent, from the previous rightful king, Henry III. 'Cum defuncto jam, celebris memoriae, domino Henrico Rege, patre nostro, ad nos regni gubernaculum successione haereditaria, ac procerum regni voluntate, & fideliate nobis praestita, sit devolutum...' *Foedera*, II, i, 1019, records Edward II's proclamation of his peace, his declaration, in Norman French, echoes that of his father's, 'Coe le tresnoble prince, sire Edward, qui estoit n'adgueres Roi d'Engleterre, soit a Deu comande: e nostre seignur, sire Edward, son fiuz, & son heir, soit ja Roi d'Engleterre par descente de heritage...'

[53] Wilkinson, Constitutional History, 172.

[54] Taken together the *proclamanda* and the *publicanda* can be viewed as performing the same function as previous announcements of the end of one rule and the commencement of the next. This previously had been achieved through the publication of the last testament of the dead king, which in the cases of Richard I, John and Henry III confirmed their successor by name, directly followed by the announcement of the new king's peace. Regarded in this light the *proclamanda* can be regarded as the announcement of the end of the rule of Edward II and of his wishes for the succession, rendering the *publicanda* the affirmation by Edward III of his acceptance of this role.

route of official proclamations, through the sheriffs, on the 29 January.[55] The *pace publicanda* was issued in Latin rather than the French of the *proclamanda*, which seems a conscious attempt to emphasise its truth and authority.[56] The *publicanda* elaborates upon the 'de sa bone volunte' of the *proclamanda*, making the resignation not only voluntary but also spontaneous and voluntary (spontanea voluntate).[57] Furthermore, there was an additional reference to Edward II in the *publicanda* of the peace, which was that Edward II was very pleased (beneplacito) with the new situation.[58] Edward III was crowned on the 1 February 1327. He was just fourteen at this time and although a council was appointed to support him, the reins of governance continued to be firmly held by Isabella and Roger Mortimer.[59]

Despite this attempt to re-write the official account of the end of Edward II's rule there does not appear to have been any effort made to suppress other accounts. The *Pipewell Chronicle*, for example, supports the chronology of deposition followed by acceptance, rather than the *Forma's* version of events and affords another contemporary view of the situation.[60] This chronicle describes Edward II as 'cruel and malevolent as before' in his alleged refusal to attend the gathering at Westminster to answer the charges against his rule; but, during the second visit to him at Kenilworth for the renunciation of homage, upon hearing his 'aforementioned shortcomings' he is immediately

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[55] Gaillard Lapsley, 'The Parliamentary Title of Henry IV', *EHR*, 49 (1934), 577-606 at 581.
[56] An alternative interpretation of the French of the *proclamanda* and the Latin of the *publicanda* would be that as Edward II had proclaimed his peace in French it would be appropriate and authentic for the announcement of the end of his rule also to be in French. French was also the language in which he made his coronation oaths.
[57] *Foedera*, II, ii, 683.
[58] Ibid, 'Nosque, ipsius patris nostri beneplacito, in hac parte...'
[59] See: Haines, *Edward II*, 195-96; F. W. Brie, *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, I (London, 1906), 254, 'ffor þe Kyng and alle þe lordes þat shulde gouerne him, were gouernede & reulede after þe Kyngus moder, Dame Isabel, and by Sir Roger þe Mortymer'.
[60] Maude Clarke, *Medieval Representation and Consent* (New York, 1964), 193, describes the Pipewell Chronicle as 'a short French chronicle of the reign of Edward II...Cotton MS. Julius A 1, ff. 51-52. ...written in a hand of the first half of the fourteenth century.' Pipewell Abbey was a Cistercian House in Northamptonshire.

transformed into a remorseful, kneeling and weeping penitent.[61] That this described scene is meant to represent a sacramental confession is established by the culmination of the scene, in which Edward II is 'pardoned' and 'the sign of peace' is given to him.[62] Yet this confession is addressed specifically to the body politic, as represented by parliament, and the sign of peace is not bestowed upon him by a priest but by William Trussel, a Lancastrian knight, who was there to perform the renunciation of homage.[63] The *Pipewell Chronicle* records Edward II as having confessed his political sins, accepted his penance (renouncing the crown) and having been absolved, his political slate is wiped clean.[64]

The common ground between the *Forma* and the *Pipewell Chronicle* lies in their presentation of Edward II as a reformed character, either in the voluntary resignation, after recognising his failings, of the *Forma* or the penitential acceptance of the deposition in the *Pipewell Chronicle*. Such perceptions of Edward II as either voluntarily abdicating the throne or contritely accepting his deposition, as an appropriate penance for his misrule,

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[61] Ibid, 183, Note A, 'qil fust demorant en mesmes la cruealtee et malevoluntee qe devant'; 195, 'il furent chargeez et il devant eaux touz granta de sa pure volunte qe il avoit malement governe eaux et la terre et de ceo lermant et seant a genulz les cria il merci et pria qeaux le voleient pardoner et qil priassent en pleyn parlement, qeaux ly pardonassent ceo qil avoit trespasse contre eaux.'

[62] Ibid, 195, 'Et sus ceo vint monsieur William Troussell de Petlyng et sassaist a genulz devant nostre seignur le roy et le cria merci en priant qili voleit pardoner ceo qili avoit trespasse et ili pardona devant tresouz et ly dona signe de pees.' For the significance of the sign of peace see: Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: ritual, self and society in the high and late medieval West* (Leiden, 2003), 2, 'the kiss of peace stood out as the most powerful peace act'.

[63] *Select Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485*, eds. S. B. Chrimes and A. L. Brown (London, 1961), 38; for a biography of Trussel see: R. M. Haines, 'Trussell, Sir William (*fl.* 1307-1346/7)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. Jan. 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27780> accessed 13 Oct. 2012.

[64] John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *TRHS*, Fifth Series, 25 (1975), 21-38 at 22, 'the effect of the sacrament is to restore a condition of peace (pax) between the sinner and the church; in return for the acceptance by the penitent of his 'penance', the church extends its forgiveness, restores to charity, and in charity prays to God that he may also forgive.'

demonstrate the first step in the transformation of Edward II from 'rex insufficiens' to potential saint.[65] For an understanding of him as remorseful and beseeching the forgiveness of his people, once adopted, would permit a transformation of his image in the popular imagination. After his 'body politic' had been dissolved, a more sympathetic understanding of him could arise; he could appear absolved of the misdeeds associated with his rule and only his 'body natural' would remain.[66] His body natural, then unmasked, remained that of an anointed and acclaimed king and therefore enmeshed within contemporary conceptualisations of the mystic nature of kings.[67] In effect, the deposition humanised Edward II but failed to de-sacralise him.

Stretching from the public announcement of the *publicanda* to find evidence that this message transformed Edward II in the social imagination from despot to gentle penitent is always going to be tendentious. Yet, even at the time of his deposition, Edward was not without supporters, which in itself is the most plausible reason for the pressing for acceptance of abdication rather than deposition.[68] Furthermore, this was a much more palatable version of events, for embedded in what John Dickinson terms 'the heritage of ideas' were the twin notions that 'kingship is an honor bestowed by God, and a criminal attempt against the prince is an attempt against God himself'.[69] Therefore, the idea that the king had resigned of his own free will, in favour of his son, exonerated the whole population from any taint of sedition and ameliorated the cognitive dissonance that could otherwise have ensued.

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[65] Edward Peters, *The Shadow King: "Rex Inutilis" in Medieval Law and Literature, 751-1327* (New Haven and London, 1970), 238.

[66] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Chichester, 1957).

[67] See: Lesley A. Coote, *Prophesy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2000), 83-119.

[68] Valente, 'Deposition', 855-60, details the lengths the Mortimer alliance went to in order to get the assembly to agree to the deposition.

[69] John Dickinson, 'The Medieval Conception of Kingship and some of its Limitation as developed in the Policraticus of John of Salisbury', *Speculum*, 1 (1926), 308-37 at 308, 313.

Moreover, this version could be readily acculturated into the prevailing Christian doctrine of confession, repentance and penance leading to divine forgiveness. However, the idea of Edward II voluntarily renouncing the throne also presented the opportunity to interpret this event as a significant foundation for representations of him as a royal-saint.[70]

To reshape the deposition as an abdication and re-establish Edward II as a worthy father to the new king entailed the obfuscation of the complaints against him; significantly, there is no mention of them in either the *proclamanda* or *publicanda* of the King's Peace. This omission also fitted into the idea of the loss of the throne being a penitential act, which eradicated the sins that were its genitor. This nevertheless left a void in the officially constructed narrative, on the subject of why Edward II had 'spontaneously and voluntarily' removed himself from the throne. Moreover, there was no stereotype upon which to model an understanding of Edward II after he had resigned the throne. However, the exaltation of kings who voluntarily gave up their thrones to pursue a spiritual life was already embedded in the English tradition of kingship through the writing of Bede.[71] In this account, a hierarchy of nobility was presented, using the examples of Cenred of Mercia and Offa, king of the Saxons, whereby to reign well was noble but to give up a throne to follow Christ was even nobler.[72] Such notions could be readily painted onto a king who was understood to have resigned the throne. Nelson explains the idea of the superiority of kings 'renouncing the world' as being 'most spectacular in their case because they had the most to lose'.[73]

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[70] Nelson, 'Royal-saints', 41.
[71] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Judith McClure and Roger Collins, (Oxford, 1994).
[72] Ibid, 267, records that Cenred, king of Mercia who had ruled 'very nobly, with still greater nobility renounced the throne of his kingdom', Bede then relates that Offa, king of the Saxons also chose the tonsure over the crown and he 'left his wife, his lands, his kinsmen, and his fatherland for Christ and the gospel'.
[73] Nelson, 'Royal saints', 41.

The practicalities of managing a former king were addressed at the same meeting that deposed Edward II, where it was agreed that he should 'be well guarded and honestly kept for the rest of his life, according to his estate'.[74] This intention is reflected in the treasury accounts of an allowance of five pounds a day, 'for the expenses of Lord Edward, father of the king, formerly king of England' (pro expensis domini E. nuper Regis Anglie patris Regis), an amount that Phillips terms 'not lavish but...enough to keep Edward in modest comfort'.[75] In the judgement of Roger Mortimer, three years after Edward's announced death, the intention was more fully expressed; this states that Edward II was, after the deposition, 'at his ease and to be served as befitted such a lord'.[76] The term 'such a lord' is redolent of both the hierarchical status of Edward II and the spiritual power that continued to reside in him as an anointed and acclaimed king. The notion of him being 'at his ease' suggests that he was seen as relieved of an arduous task and also implies that this was a well-earned respite. Geoffrey le Baker even shapes the promise of continuing 'honour' for the former king as one of the deceptive tactics employed to persuade Edward II to resign the throne.[77]

The separate evidences offered by the *Forma*, the *Pipewell Chronicle* and official records support the contention that Edward II was presented and understood as transformed by his removal from the throne from 'cruel and malevolent' into a noble and benign figure. Such ideas may have been of particular importance for the protection of the reputation of Edward III.

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[74] Valente, 'Deposition', 862, n.1.
[75] Stuart Moore, 'Documents relating to the death and burial of king Edward II', *Archaeologia*, 50 (1887), 215-26 at 223; Phillips, *Edward II*, 541.
[76] *English Historical Documents 1327-1485*, ed. A. R. Myers (London, 1969), 53.
[77] *The Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker*, trans. David Preest, Introduction and notes by Richard Barber (Woodbridge, 2012), 26, '[they] quite cleverly got round the king by promising him that he would have no less honour after laying down the honour of his crown than his royal majesty had been accustomed to receive from all previously.'

Walsingham, in the *Historia Anglicana*, records that Edward III 'swore that he would never accept the royal crown without his father's consent'.[78] This statement indemnifies Edward III from any accusations of usurpation. Contingent upon this interpretation of events was the reintegration of Edward II into a model of self-sacrificing kingship; for the reciprocal demand of the claim that Edward III would not have accepted the throne without his father's consent is that Edward II was at least equally magnanimous in offering the crown to his son. Walsingham's account of the announcement of the end of the rule of Edward II is a direct copy of the Latin *pace publicanda*.[79] This chronicle, although produced at least fifty years after the events it describes, demonstrates that by this time this version had succeeded in becoming, for some, the accepted truth of the matter.

That Edward II was not immediately forgotten by the people is indicated in the account of the coronation of Edward III in the Dunstable Chronicle; interpolated into the description of this magnificent event is the disconcerting reminder – 'And Edward the king's father was at that time imprisoned in the castle of Kenilworth' (Et E[dwardus] rex pater tunc fuit in custodia, in castello de Kenelworthe).[80] Such parataxis shows that thoughts of the coronation of Edward III also brought to mind ideas of his father. The use of 'Et' to introduce the phrase links it directly to the rest of the text, making it an integral part of the commentary on the coronation. This suggests that the author of this chronicle was contemplating the idiosyncrasy of the situation of crowning a king while his father was in prison and making a comparison of

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[78] Thomae Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H.T. Riley, 2 Vols. (London, 1863-4), I, 186, 'juravit quod invito patre numquam susciperet coronam regni'.
[79] Ibid. i, 187, 'Quia Dominus Edwardus, nuper Rex Angliae, pater noster, de communi consilio et assensu Praelatorum, et Comitum et Baronum, et aliorum magnatum, necon communitatum, totius regni praedicti, spontanea voluntate se amovit a regimine dicti regni, volens et concedens quod nos, tanquam ipsius primogenitus et haeres ipsius, regni gubernationem et regimen assumamus; nosque ipsius patris nostri beneplacito in hac parte'.
[80] *Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia*, ed. H. R. Luard (London, 1866), 411.

their situations. There is no direct plea for sympathy for the elder Edward but the reader cannot but be drawn to feelings of compassion.

Another significant factor in the rehabilitation of the character of Edward II stemmed from rapid disillusionment with the new regime of Isabella as *de facto* ruler and Roger Mortimer as her counterpart. Sophia Menache considers that during Edward II's kingship 'Isabelle's status was totally inverse to that of her husband's', a situation that it can be argued remained a constant after Isabella's invasion until her death in 1358.[81] Isabella's zenith and Edward II's nadir coincided at the deposition and the polarity of their reputations continued after this point. Although the period between Isabella's invasion of England and Edward II's death was little more than a year, it was the imprisonment of Edward II during this period, combined with largely imaginary accounts of his treatment, which allowed ideas of him as wretched and abused to form. This, it can be argued, was because the continued imprisonment of Edward II after he was portrayed as having completed the three steps of the penitential process - confession, repentance and penance - traduced the accepted Christian belief. Following this process, Edward should have been rewarded with forgiveness - not perpetual incarceration.

Scholars who have considered the fundamentals of the cult that arose around the memory of Edward II have suggested that there may have been a political dimension to the cult.[82] Such considerations of Edward II as a 'political saint', inherently understood as a cult that incorporates criticism of the governance of the nation, have been all but dismissed because of the comparatively short period of the *de facto* rule of Isabella and Mortimer.[83]

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[81] Sophia Menache, 'Isabelle of France, queen of England – a reconsideration', *Journal of Medieval History*, 10 (1984), 107-24 at 110.
[82] See: for example, Walker, 'Political Saints', 84; Piroyansky, *Martyrs*, 101.
[83] Walker, ibid, 84.

Walker, a significant promoter of this view, underestimates the length of the Isabella and Mortimer regime at 'eighteen months' whereas it would be more accurate to say that it lasted from 20 November 1326 (when Edward II gave up the Great seal) to October 1330 (when Edward III assumed personal rule), a period of nearly four years. Furthermore, there was criticism of Isabella's actions during this period, which challenged and ultimately overwrote the projection of her as a dishonoured wife and champion of the English people. This negative view of the Isabella and Mortimer regime, when compounded by ideas of Edward II's unwarranted imprisonment, resulted in a sense of injustice and public shame. In such situations, in order to mitigate any perception of shared culpability on the part of the people as a whole, blame is frequently displaced onto a scapegoat. In this case the focus of blame appears, from the surviving evidence, to be Edward's queen, Isabella of France. An alternative candidate would have been Roger Mortimer, ennobled as earl of March in 1328.[84] However, as he was executed concomitantly with the announcement that the death of Edward II was a murder, he died before there was widespread acknowledgment of a capital crime. Furthermore, he could be regarded as having been suitably punished for his crimes. In contrast, Isabella, as Edward II's wife, could be shaped as a double deviant, deceiving the people into acceptance of the deposition and imprisonment of their king and ignoring the accepted mores of female and more pertinently, queenly behaviour. A French tract, of 1347 (translated into English in the fifteenth century), describes the queen's role as to

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[84] Phillips, *Edward II*, 418.

> have good and due regard to such thinge as toucheth
> the profyte and the honeure of hir lorde and hir self.
> And she shulde take in hand noo grete maters with
> oute license or cognie [permission] of hir lord, anents
> [as regards] wham at all tymes she oweth to bere
> reverence and oneure.[85]

This projection of desirable queenship was written only twenty years after the death of Edward II, during Isabella's lifetime and 'probably' for a cousin of Isabella's, the future King John II of France.[86] A critique of Isabella's queenship can be read in this, for she did take a 'grete mater' into her own hand with absolute disregard for the 'honeure' of her husband, for whom she seemed to bear no 'reverence'.

A surviving poem reflects some of the complex and shifting political views that followed from Isabella's invasion and *de facto* assumption of power. The poem, although uniquely found within a manuscript of the second half of the fourteenth century, can only have been conceived between the deposition in January 1327 and the death of Edward II in October 1327.[87] The seven line Anglo-Norman verse is aptly described as 'a piece of verbal acrobatics'.[88] Its overall thrust is supportive of Queen Isabella in ridding the country of the hated Despensers but warns her that she is undermining her good standing by keeping her husband prisoner. That the poem is addressed to Isabella, as the jailor of Edward II, rather than Edward III underscores the latter's

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[85] J. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford, 2004), 3, from *The III Consideracions Right Necesserye to the Good Governaunce of a Prince* by Geoffroi de Charny.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Diana Tyson, 'Three Short Anglo-Norman Texts in Leeds University Library Brotherton Collection MS 29', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 52 (2008), 81-112 at 81. For a description of Brotherton MS 29 see: *The Anonimalle Chronicle 1333 to 1381*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester 1927), xviii-xxiv.
[88] Tyson, ibid, 100.

political impotence between his coronation and his assumption of personal power in 1330. The poem, as transcribed by Diana Tyson, reads:

> *Dame de haut prisse, de toutz bien aprisse,*
> *Mult avez bien aprisse de prendre haut enprisse.*
> *Lors traytures aves pryse; faet avez bel pryse.*
> *Mult estes en grant pryse qe tutz le munde mausprise,*
> *Mes de un reyn avez mesprise, dunt dussez estre*
> *reprise:*
> *Qe vostre seignour tenez prise en prisone, sauntz*
> *meynprise.*
> *Poy avez perdu los e prise si ne amendez cele enprise.*

This she translates as:

> Lady of great esteem, well informed of all things,
> You have learned very well how to embark on an
> exalted undertaking.
> Consequently you have captured traitors; you have
> made a good catch.
> You, whom all the world misprizes, are greatly valued.
> But in one respect you have erred, about which you
> must be reproved:
> That you hold your lord captive in prison, without bail.
> You [will] have somewhat lost renown and esteem if
> you do not make amends for this conspiracy.[89]

The sentiments expressed are suggestive of the very short-lived satisfaction with the new regime. The first three lines seem to praise Isabella but the praise is tempered by reservations. The pivotal fourth line introduces a sinister tone in the allegation that Isabella is misprized (mausprise) by the whole world and valued only because of her capture of traitors (the Despensers). The connotation is that her positive achievements are in the past and have little currency against her current unpopularity, an unpopularity that, according to this ditty, stems from matters other than her husband's imprisonment. Evidence of concerns about Isabella's popularity can be found as early as April 1327, when '[t]he bishop of London...was

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[89] Ibid, 112.

ordered to denounce all who criticised the queen, and to require the comprovincial bishops to do likewise.'[90] The queen had also quickly proved herself to be rapacious, she tripled her annual dower (to the sum of 20,000 marks) and depleting the treasury by the sum of £49,890 2s 1d in the first three months of her control.[91] Moreover, the new regime failed to improve the situation of the English in relation to the Scots. On the night of Edward III's coronation, the Scots invaded and laid siege to Norham castle.[92] An attempt to mount war against the Scots in June 1327 proved disastrous and nearly resulted in the capture of the young king.[93] Any of these issues would harm Isabella's reputation.

Henry Knighton, a late fourteenth century chronicler, reported five matters that he felt adversely affected Isabella's standing with the people.[94] Menache summarises these as 'her usurpation of the prerogatives of the lawful ruler...her wasting of the royal funds...her ties with Mortimer; the shameful peace treaty with the Scots...the execution of Edmund, earl of Kent'.[95] Although the execution of Edmund, earl of Kent and the peace treaty with the Scots lay ahead in time of the poem, it can be argued that the other

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[90] R. M. Haines, 'The Stamford Council of April 1327', *EHR*, 122 (2007), 141-8 at 144.
[91] See: B. P. Wolfe, *The Royal Demesne in English History* (London, 1971), 232-6, for details of the lands assumed by Isabella in 1327; Fryde, *Tyranny*, 209.
[92] Fryde, ibid, 210.
[93] Ibid, 213.
[94] J. R. Lumby, ed., *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel cnitton, Monachi Leycestrensis*, I (London 1889), 447, 'regina Isabella et Rogerus de Mortuo mari unanimi assensu appropriaverunt sibi regalem potestatem in multis et regni thesaurum, et subpeditaverunt regem' (Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer appropriated by their unanimous assent, royal power for themselves, in many things, and the treasure of the new king, and trampled upon the king)...'Multa et gravia onera patriae intulerunt, et semper simul in uno hospitio hospitati sunt, unde multa obloquia et murmura de eis suspectuosa oriuntur' (They brought many and grave burdens to the homeland, and they always lodged in one place together whence many remarks and suspicious murmurs arose concerning them.) Ibid, 452, 'quod fovebant Scotos in magnam derogationem et dedecus regis et regni Angliae, et quomodo exterminaverat regem Edwardum quondam maritum suum' (they were favouring the Scots to the great derogation and shame of the king and of the English realm, and in what way she expelled king Edward her then husband).
[95] Menache, 'Isabelle of France', 112.

three issues were all matters of common knowledge before the death of Edward II. Haines argues that by April 1327 the matter of the queen's relationship with Mortimer 'was notorious' and that 'Mortimer's overweening behaviour provoked resentment'.[96]

Yet, in the poem, the criticism is focussed on Isabella for holding 'her lord' (vostre seignour) prisoner without 'bail' (meynprise). This line raises two very substantial issues. First, is the nature of the relationship between Isabella and Edward II; prior to the deposition Edward II was Isabella's lord as both her king and her husband. Even after the acceptance that he was no longer king, he remained her lord as husband. Therefore, she continued to owe him both the obedience of a wife to a husband and the rights of the conjugal bed. The second issue that of bail, points to complex matters of law and justice, at the core of which are unanswered and unanswerable questions relating to the legality of the imprisonment of Edward II. If, as is generally accepted, the same meeting that deposed (or accepted the abdication of) Edward II determined that he was to be imprisoned for life, then, the question arises of under whose authority that decision was made.[97] For, unless it was to be supposed that Edward II had ordered his own life sentence, the reign of Edward III did not commence until 25 January. Moreover, Edward II was held without trial in contravention of *habeas corpus* and the rights of subjects of the crown granted under *Magna Carta*. However, Edward II's rights and status, after he ceased being king, are in themselves problematic, having been crowned, anointed and acclaimed could he then revert to become a subject? This would assume that the act of deposition or resignation held equal transformative power to the ceremonies of coronation and therefore returned Edward II to his original state, an argument for which

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[96] Haines, 'Stamford Council', 143, 142.
[97] Either the rule of Edward II ended on 13 January at Westminster or by 20 or 21 January at Kenilworth.

there was no precedent. All these matters are compressed into the ostensibly simple postulation that Edward II should be allowed bail.

The final line of the poem causes problems for its translator in that the tense of the verbs in the two parts of the line do not agree. Tyson edits the first verb from the perfect 'you have' to the future perfect 'you [will] have'; to agree with the second verb 'you do not'. Yet it can be argued that the manuscript copy is closer to the original intent of the poem. Isabella has already lost 'renown and esteem' and her only chance of recovering them is to conduct herself with more propriety and cease debasing her husband. Yet, any opportunity for Isabella to recover her standing was lost when her husband's death in prison was termed a murder. Her reputation became fixed at this point and she continued thereafter to be regarded as a false wife and usurper.

The whole venture of Isabella's invasion of England is criticised in a protest badge, which, although it does not directly refer to Edward II, implies support for him through condemnation of the campaign that resulted in his downfall. James Robinson recognised that the badge was formed as a parody of a pilgrim badge of the cult of the Virgin of Boulogne or 'Our Lady of the Sea'.[98] The richness of the lampoon is enhanced by the fact that Boulogne is where Isabella and Edward II were married on 25 January 1308.[99]

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[98] James Robinson, 'Pilgrimage and Protest: badges at the British Museum relating to Thomas of Lancaster and Isabella, queen of Edward II' in *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer*, ed. Sarah Blick (Oxford, 2007), 170-81 at 179. The cult of the Virgin of Boulogne or the Virgin of the Sea grew up around the legend that in c.633 a boat carrying a statue of the Virgin appeared in the estuary, the statue when taken to the church proved to be thaumaturgical.
[99] Phillips, *Edward II*, 134.

Pilgrim badges of 'Our Lady of the Sea' vary in their details and style but the common elements are a representation of the virgin, with nimbus or headdress, sitting or standing in a boat (sometimes reduced to a beaded crescent, sometimes with decorated prow and stern), usually accompanied by an infant Christ (on the Virgin's lap or held aloft). The British Museum holds thirty medieval French examples of these.[100] No two of these badges are identical in form or size, indicating that all come from different moulds. Twelve of them are known to have been found in the Thames basin. This suggests either the popularity of Boulogne as a pilgrimage destination or a trade in pilgrim badges, outside of their place of origin.[101]

The badge, here under discussion, is a unique example and does not form part of the group of recognised badges of the cult of the Virgin of Boulogne.[102] It is 1.5 inches in length, which sits around the middle of the range of sizes of the Boulogne badges. However, the material of the badge, 'eutectic pewter' and the production method, utilising a 'two-part reverse mould', suggest that it was produced in England, not France.[103] It is described in the British Museum catalogue as 'Badge (?); lead; boat with crowned female with crowned ithyphallus on arm and holding phallus in other hand.'[104]

The central figure of the badge is that of a sexualised queen. The head, tilted to the left, is modelled with long flowing wavy hair, the lips are sensually full

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[100] See: for example, British Museum AN159623001 (reg. no 1856,0701.2065) exhibited at BM Treasures of Heaven, 23 June-9 October 2011. The description reads - 'length 1.22", lead alloy, mould-made in France. The badge shows a Virgin with crown, nimbus and sceptre, standing in a crescent shaped boat, with Christ-child and nimbus.'
[101] Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, General Prologue, L.465, in reference to the Wife of Bath, 'At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne'.
[102] British Museum, WITT.269AN15791.
[103] Robinson, 'Pilgrimage and Protest', 180.
[104] See Illustration 1 at 255.

and suggestively parted. The figure is clothed in a 'tight fitting, low-waisted robe with buttoned sleeves and a full skirt', which draws attention to the shape of the body, notably the slimness of the waist.[105] The stance of the figure reinforces the sexuality of the individual components, the arms are held away from the body and the torso leans provocatively back from the hips, emphasising the lower abdomen. A strategically placed fold of the skirt, just below the hips, directs attention to and visibly mimics her pudenda. An obscenely oversized and crowned penis (and testicles) is held aloft, supported on the outstretched left arm and hand of the queen; it is towards this object that her head is tilted. The crown on the penis reaches slightly lower than that of the queen. The queen in presenting the crowned penis towards the prow of the ship is also presenting it, as an offering, to those who will meet them on their arrival at their destination.

The prow and stern of the boat take the form of birds' heads, with prominent beaks; the one that forms the prow is assaulting the arm of the queen. The beak of the bird's head that forms the stern is broken but even if whole would not project far enough to reach the figure of the queen, re-enforcing the impression that it is the forward motion of the boat that should be inhibited. These birds are possibly representations of cranes, who were understood as symbols of 'vigilance, loyalty, good life and works' and among whose attributes was the understanding that 'each night the cranes gather in a circle around their king' to protect him and warn of danger.[106] That the bird on the prow of the ship is attacking the queen suggests that she is acting improperly and should desist from her endeavours.

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[105] Robinson, 'Pilgrimage and Protest', 178.
[106] George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art*, (Oxford, 1961), 14.

In contrast to the prominent display of the crowned penis, the second penis is behind the queen, grasped in her right hand, below her hip level, suggesting that this element is one that would be concealed from view, as the boat arrived in port. The end of the second penis is broken, leading Robinson to conjecture whether it too may have been crowned.[107] However the manner in which the queen grasps this penis, in a parody of the grip of a tiller (which is shown as unattended and ignored) precludes the possibility that it bore a crown. This penis is the concealed propelling force of the whole assemblage, manifestly controlled through the sexual manipulations of the queen.

This emblem, in a symbolic inversion of a Virgin of Boulogne badge, shows Isabella as the queen, Edward III as the crowned penis and Roger Mortimer as the second penis. The badge, as a whole, tells of Isabella's invasion of England by sea, guided by Mortimer, who is under her sexual thrall. According to this badge, Isabella's justification for this deed was her bringing with her the promise of a new ruler. The representation of Isabella is as the antithesis of the Virgin Mary. Isabella is shown as immodest, venially sexual and directly engaged with her own prestige and standing. This inversion, mentally extrapolated, further implies that Isabella is proud, as the Virgin is humble and disobedient to God, as the Virgin is obedient.

The narrative of the brooch criticises Isabella's duplicity in that it alleges that she seduced the people into deposing Edward II and replacing him, in name only, with her son Edward III. The act of deposition itself is denounced by the bird, which is attacking the arm that holds the crowned penis aloft. The bird is visibly not assailing Edward III himself but the figure that is manipulating his position. Further condemnation is heaped on Isabella in that

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[107] Robinson, 'Pilgrimage and Protest', 179.

she allegedly concealed from the people the nature of her relationship with Roger Mortimer; perhaps the badge is even suggesting this as a motive for the deposition.[108] The ultimate complaint is that instead of the promised new king and the righting of previous wrongs the people were in fact ruled by Isabella, supported by her paramour Roger Mortimer and subjected to continuing rapacious, self-serving governance. This understanding could lead to the view that this brooch was conceived and produced sometime between January 1327 and October 1330, as once Edward III assumed personal rule the impetus to criticise Isabella might have diminished. However, given the richness of the satire, this item would have continued to afford subversive pleasure until all memory of Isabella's deceit had passed - possibly well after her death. Moreover, the mimetic design of the badge ensured that its vulgarity would, at casual glance, pass unnoticed and therefore escape prohibition.

Imprisonment

Factual details of the circumstances of Edward II after the events of January 1327 are scant. After the deposition, he initially remained at Kenilworth in the custody of Henry, earl of Lancaster, younger brother and heir of the executed Thomas, earl of Lancaster.[109] Henry of Lancaster was a powerful figure and as he had not, unlike his brother, supported the contrariants had escaped the blood-bath and financial repercussions visited upon the contrariants. Edward II recognised Henry as earl of Leicester, one of the

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[108] Haines, *Edward II*, 338, 'The nature of Mortimer's long-term intentions must remain a mystery, though there were rumours that he had designs on the Crown.' Ormrod, *Edward III*, 88, 'It was later reported by a number of chroniclers that Queen Isabella fell pregnant with Mortimer's child some time during 1330 and that, on this basis, the earl of March began by the end of the summer to plan his own usurpation of the throne.'
[109] Scott L. Waugh, 'Henry of Lancaster, third earl of Lancaster and third earl of Leicester (c.1280-1345)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, May 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12959>, accessed 20 Oct 2011.

earldoms held by his elder brother, in March 1324.[110] Henry's increasing opposition to the Despensers later subverted his allegiance to Edward II and he became a central figure both during Isabella's invasion and of the deposition. His reward for this was the restoration of the earldom of Lancaster.[111] Despite this, as an independent magnate and a blood relative of Edward II, he could be regarded as affording his cousin an appropriate if confined life. However, on the 3 April 1327, Edward II's custody was transferred to Thomas, Lord Berkeley and Sir John Maltravers and he was moved to Berkeley castle. Although Lancaster, Berkeley and Maltravers were all active supporters of the deposition, there was a political significance in the change of keeper. For, Berkeley and Maltravers were bound both as compatriots and through networks of kinship to Roger Mortimer. Berkeley was the son-in-law of Mortimer, as he was married to his eldest daughter, Margaret. Maltravers was married to Berkeley's sister and therefore his brother in law. In addition, both men had served under Mortimer against Edward II during the civil war of 1321-22.[112] Berkeley may also have held a personal grievance against Edward II. His father, Maurice de Berkeley, had been a contrariant and close associate of Roger Mortimer.[113] After the defeat of the contrariants, the castle of Berkeley was forfeited to the crown and he was imprisoned at Wallingford, where he died.[114]

It was also in April 1327 that 'it was felt necessary to re-examine the queen's marital situation', because 'the queen's name was being besmirched by continuing rumours about her obstinacy in refusing to uphold her marriage

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[110] Phillips, *Edward II*, 414.
[111] Ibid, 513, Phillips notes that Henry was 'styled earl of Lancaster' on 26 October 1326 but that formal restoration took place on 3 Feb. 1327, as one of the first acts of Edward III's rule.
[112] Ibid, 361.
[113] Ibid, 440.
[114] Haines, *Edward II*, 167.

vows contrary to the urgings of magnates and prelates'.[115] This matter may suggest a motive for moving the ex-king into deeper seclusion. However, Phillips finds evidence that the earl of Lancaster was concerned about his ability to prevent Edward's 'friends and allies' from freeing him from his imprisonment, and that he therefore, 'was eager for his royal charge to be moved somewhere safer'.[116] Yet, whatever the reasons were for the change of keepers and place of confinement, it effectively removed Edward from relatively nonpartisan control and delivered him into the hands of his adversaries.

The removal of Edward to Berkeley did not end the attempts to free him and it may well be that an attempt in July 1327 did briefly succeed in this objective. A letter of 27 July from Thomas de Berkeley alludes to a previous letter in which he had named the men who had snatched 'the father of our lord the king' from his confinement.[117] As Phillips concludes, this letter fails to show, 'whether Edward had actually been taken out of the castle by the conspirators or whether he had only been freed from his prison within the castle.'[118] Whichever was the case Edward was rapidly restored to custody. On 14 September 1327 news of a further conspiracy to free Edward was disclosed to Roger Mortimer, who, it is alleged, then sent word to Berkeley 'to take speedy action to avoid great danger'.[119] The 'great danger', of Edward being freed and restored to power, was averted by his death, on 21 September.

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[115] Ibid, 198; Haines, 'Stamford Council', 143.
[116] Phillips, *Edward II*, 542.
[117] Ibid, 544.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid, 547-48, the allegation that Mortimer sent this message comes from a trial account of March 1331. The defendant, William Shaldeford, had been accused of 'aiding and abetting the murder of Edward II' and he offered this counterclaim as his defence.

Chapter 2

The Lament of Edward II & the Fieschi Letter

Two near contemporary productions describe the living but no longer king, Edward II. The first is a poem known as *The Lament of Edward II* which survives in two Anglo-Norman copies, in hands of the earlier part of the fourteenth century.[1] The second is known as the *Fieschi Letter*, written in Latin which survives as a single copy, in a cartulary 'usually said to have been compiled in 1368'.[2]

The Lament purportedly gives Edward II's perspective on his deposition and imprisonment.[3] The piece is written as a soliloquy and the voice presented as that of Edward II, initially bemoaning the ill-fate and bad luck that has brought him from king to prisoner. Yet the story it tells in its fifteen stanzas is of Edward II's spiritual transformation during his imprisonment. After four stanzas of complaint and self justification the voice of the poem moves on to reflect more deeply upon his personal failings and after stanza ten, reaches a position of growing acceptance and contrition. Stanzas five, ten and fifteen reflect the sequential completion of the necessary stages in the subject's progress towards spiritual perfection.

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[1] Longleat MS. 26 and BL. Royal MS. 20 A ii.

[2] Haines, '*Edwardus Redivivus*', 65; Archives departmentales d'Herault, G 1123, f.86r.

[3] The poem comprises fifteen stanzas of eight octosyllabic lines and the rhyme is a simple a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b scheme. Diana Tyson, 'Lament for a Dead King', *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), 359-75, refers to a Latin version (London College of Arms, MS Arundel 48, ff 153r-154r) in a fifteenth century hand. She felt unsure whether this was the genitor or a derivation of the Anglo-Norman version. However, as the Latin version lacks the catchwords that link the stanzas in the Anglo-Norman versions and the anagrams of Isabella's name found in line 107 of the Anglo-Norman copies, the Latin version can be regarded as a translation of the Anglo-Norman and on this basis it is excluded from this discussion. Isabel Aspin, *Anglo-Norman Political Songs* (Oxford 1953), 93-104, offers a transcription and translation of the Longleat MS, it is her transcription and translation that will be referred to hereafter, unless otherwise stated.

The *Fieschi Letter* is, ostensibly, a copy of one sent to Edward III by Manuele de Fieschi, a papal notary, who went on to became bishop of Vercelli in July 1343.[4] It recounts that Edward II, having been warned of the forthcoming murder attempt, ordered by his wife, escaped from Berkeley castle, killing a porter during the process. The account claims that it was this porter who was buried at Gloucester, in place of the king. Edward II, according to the letter, spent the following eighteen months at Corfe Castle before travelling to Ireland, where he spent a further nine months. After this, in the guise of a hermit, he travelled to the papal court at Avignon, where he was secretly received by Pope John XXII. Here he was kept in honour for a further fifteen days. Subsequently, he allegedly made a pilgrimage to the shrine of the three kings at Cologne before entering a hermitage at Melazzo, only moving from there, because of an outbreak of war, to another hermitage at the castle of Cecima, where, the implication is, he still lived at the time the letter was written.[5] As the conclusion of the letter accounts, he remained, 'always the recluse, doing penance, and praying God for you and other sinners.'[6]

Both of these writings have been the subject of scholarly analysis and both have independently been suggested as contrived pieces of *quasi* political propaganda, written with the purpose of enhancing the reputation of Edward II.[7] This view is not challenged but the suggestions made as to practical purposes for enhancing Edward II's reputation seem misplaced. Neither text drives to any suggestion that any action is required on behalf of Edward II; the texts are descriptive and reflective, their tonality is neutral. They do not promote or engage with the feelings of anger and outrage that would be

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[4] G. P. Cuttino and Thomas W. Lyman, 'Where is Edward II?' *Speculum*, 53 (1978), 522-44 at 529.

[5] Ibid, 526-28.

[6] Ibid, 207.

[7] Tout, 'The Captivity', Appendix II, *'The Lament of Edward II'*.

required to incite popular action. Therefore Tout's suggestion that the *Lament* was written 'to effect his release [or] reinstatement' seems improbable.[8] Haines, in considering the *Fieschi Letter*, appears to undermine his own argument that the letter's purpose was the 'sanctification of a politically ineffective king who had been brutally done to death' in that the main thrust of the letter is seeking to convince that Edward has not been murdered.[9] The *Fieschi Letter* actively promotes the idea of Edward II as a redeemed character but the righteousness it portrays is embodied in a live person and not in consequence of a martyr's death.

These pictures of the imagined former king are pertinent as they are evidence of the characters that were imagined for the king after the loss of the throne. Such responses, according to Weber's theories of rationality, would be formed from a mixture of belief-orientated, affectual and traditional rationalities, all of which would tend towards the enduring notion of a king as quintessentially good, 'the hypostasis of an immortal idea'.[10] Such normative renegotiations of the character of Edward II lean towards representations and understandings of him as an ideal type that can accommodate and explain the complex cultural contradictions of a former king. Both the *Lament* and the *Fieschi Letter* demonstrate, through markedly different narratives, the common intent of presenting the former king as a noble penitent with connotations of holiness.

Considering firstly the *Lament*, the opening line of the poem sets Edward's misfortunes in winter, which is both chronologically accurate and evocative. It was over the winter of 1326 that he was held captive at Kenilworth while the deposing powers considered their position. The term winter additionally

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[8] Ibid, 50.
[9] Haines, '*Edwardus Redivivus*', 80.
[10] E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Chichester, 1957), 143.

performs as a pathetic fallacy, conjuring the appropriate backdrop to the poem with its connotations of cold and bleakness. The voice of the poem says it was in this season that harm befell him.[11] In the first stanza, Edward is incapable of recognising any responsibility for this harm; he instead blames fortune and elusive luck. The notion of bad luck is introduced as the explanation of why someone as 'fair and wise', as 'courtly and famed' as Edward, can be pronounced a 'fool'.[12] Through this construction, the author of the poem portrays Edward II as regarding himself in a wholly positive way and as shifting any blame for his present situation from his own nature to external powers. It is not until line eighteen that Edward first recognises his own culpability and of his cruel suffering, accepts that 'granted I have well deserved it'.[13] Following from this acceptance stems the long expected plea for God's mercy; having firstly blamed ill luck and then presented his greatest fault as having been too trusting; Edward then repents and considers the fate of his soul. The notion of mercy is then used as the catchword linking from stanza three into stanza four.

Stanza four is the most problematic of the fifteen. The sentiments expressed in this stanza, although linked by the use of the word mercy, do not continue or deepen the penitential line of consideration. Mercy instead of being sought from God, is expected because of the 'honours and the kindnesses which...I often did to my friends and intimates'.[14] This is the nub of the matter; Edward II at this point in the song has only superficially recognised his own faults and still hopes that his previous generosity to his favourites may help him find mercy. Whether this mercy is spiritual or physical is not made clear, for the soliloquy immediately backs away from this notion with the rather

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[11] L.1, 'En tenps de iver me survynt damage' (In winter time harm befell me).
[12] L.3, 'eure m'est faili'; L.5, 'si bel, si sage'; L.6, 'si curtois, si preyse'; L.8, 'fol'.
[13] 'E duint qe bien l'ai deservi'.
[14] L.26-8, 'Les honurs et les bontez...A mes amys et mes privez'.

weak apology 'If I Have done wrong I am sorry for it'.[15] This is then even further undermined by the self-excusatory 'I was sworn to be of their counsel'.[16] This is the lowest point of the poem, where the self-serving character of Edward II is fully exposed. His earlier claims of repentance and resignation are revealed as shallow or even sham. Yet the following couplet, which reflects upon Edward's supposed contravention of his coronation oath, perhaps initially too lightly spoken, give rise to the deeper thought processes required to reform his character.[17] Thus the lines that close stanza four - 'The wrong I have done against my oath, thou, good Lord, knowest it' - are met with a fuller realization in stanza five: 'Thou knowest it manifestly'.[18]

Stanza five then acts as Edward's deepest realization of himself as a sinful, humble penitent, his self-protecting stances discarded as he addresses his God directly:

> Thou knowest it manifestly, for none is so well
> concealed that thou dost not see full clearly both good
> and evil alike; thou wilt give judgement accordingly.
> Treat my sins there with thy mercy; do what thou wilt
> with me, for I give my soul and body to thee.[19]

Having surrendered himself to God entirely he can now 'too late...see it openly'.[20] What he sees is that he has been deceived by those he thought were friends, but rather than lapsing into fully self indulgent pity he recovers

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[15] L.29, 'Si je eye mesfet ceo poise moy'.

[16] L.30, 'A lor consayl estoie jurez'.

[17] Failure to abide by his coronation oaths is item 5 of the *Forma deposicionis*, see: Hutchinson, *Pliant King*, 169, 'wherein he was bound by his oath to do justice to all, he has not willed to do it, for his own profit and his greed and that of the evil counsellors who have been about him, nor has he kept the other points of his oath which he made at his coronation, as he was bound to do.'

[18] L.31-3, 'Ceo qe ai mesfet encontre ma foy / Beu sire Dieu vus le savez / Vus le savetz apartement'.

[19] L.33-40, 'Vus le savetz apertement / Car nul n'est si bien covery / Qe ne le voyetz tut clerement / Le Bien le mal tut altresi; / Solom ceo freetz jugement. / Mes melles la mene ove ta merci; / E de moy facez vostre talent, / Car quoer et corps a vous otroy.'

[20] L.48, 'Trop tart le ay aperceivant'.

again, in stanza nine, to reflect that since his sorrows are 'God's pleasure [he] will suffer it patiently'.[21] Stanzas nine and ten function in a similar way to stanzas four and five. The earlier stanza, in both circumstances, tells of a lower point in Edward's self-perception, which is negated as he successively reaches a higher degree of appropriate piety. Thus in stanza nine he longs for death but recovers to declare, 'I will devote myself completely to his [God's] service'.[22] The notion of serving God, at the close of stanza nine, then acts as the notion for deeper contemplation in stanza ten.

Stanza ten reflects Edward as having reached a further and higher level of religious contemplation:

> To serving Him I will turn my mind; it grieves me
> deeply that I did not always do so. It is not surprising
> if I lament, if earthly glory has deserted me. May my
> contrite heart be present to him who was crucified for
> us, but it is my earnest wish to repent me of the
> wrongs I have done in all my days.[23]

It is only having reached this level of spiritual rectitude that Edward II can consider anything other than his own personal situation and here his thoughts turn to his son, now crowned as Edward III. Through the device of what he wishes for his son's reign Edward confesses his own shortcomings but by shaping these desires within the necessity of God's aid, he is also locating the root cause of his failure in his lack of service to God, as given in stanza ten.

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21 L.70-1, 'Puis q'il est a Dieu pleyssir, / Mult bonement le suffrai'.
22 L.72, 'De tout me durray a luy servir'.
23 L.73-80, 'De luy servir mettray m'entente; / Mult me desplet qe ensi ne fis. / N'est pas mervoyle si me dement[e], / Si terrien honur m'est faylliz. / Mon quoer contrite soy present / A cely q'en croys pur nous fu mys; / Mes voyl bien qe me repent[e] / De mes mals q'ay fest tut dis.'

An analogous regard for Isabella is shown in the penultimate stanza of the *Lament* where, after Edward has reached the highest level of self-realisation, he expresses his concern for Isabella's welfare. He warns her to guard her behaviour so that, 'when the stag leaps in wrath and rends beasts with his antlers...she needs no physician'.[24] The strategy in these lines is to shape Edward II as a loving husband, whose solicitude for his wife endures through her serial betrayals. Through this technique, the persona of Edward II is elevated by traits of compassion, understanding and forgiveness.

The persona of this poem has completed his spiritual journey by the final stanza; he has renounced his self-deluding vanities that all his misfortunes are of others making and accepted that the essential matter of them lies in his failure to serve God. From this he embraces the idea that his present tribulations are God's will, intended to bring him to repentance and through true penitence enable him to hope to gain life eternal. The final stanza clearly demonstrates the altered character of Edward II in that he humbly begs all to pray for him so that he may benefit from divine mercy.

The romantic notion that this poem was written by Edward II himself is promoted in both surviving Anglo-Norman copies of the poem.[25] This notion, although challenged from the earliest scholarly considerations of the piece, still lingers.[26] When Paul Studer first brought the poem to modern attention,

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[24] L.109-12, 'Qe quant le serf se saut de ire / Et ove ses perches bestes purfent / ... / Tant se porte sagement.'

[25] The contemporary rubric of the Longleat manuscript reads, 'De le Roi Edward le fiz Roi Edward, le Chanson qe il fist mesmes' (Concerning King Edward, the son of King Edward, the Song he made himself). The Royal MS. copy places the poem below an image of Edward II as a young king in a pictorial series of post conquest kings that prefaces a copy of Langtoft's Chronicle. As the poem itself is voiced in the first person and Edward II is shown as seated directly above it, the idea of him as the author of the *Lament* is strongly suggested.

[26] See: for example, David Starkey, *Crown and Country* (London, 2010), 255, where he describes the *Lament* as a poem that 'he [Edward II] may have written himself'; Alison Weir,

he knew only of the copy in Longleat MS 26 and his analysis of this convinced him that the poem was the work of Edward II himself.[27] Tout, writing before Studer but aware of his intending publication, commented that he felt Edward II 'unlikely to write anything'.[28] Isabel Aspin, some thirty years later, discussed the historiography of the poem, as relating to the Longleat MS and offered a transcription and translation of the poem from this copy.[29] Unaware of the Royal MS, her textual comments were limited to a consideration of the Longleat MS; from this she suspected that the authorship lay in 'the hand of a clerk', rather than Edward II, but was confident that the piece was composed during the 'spring or early summer of 1327'.[30] Valente suggested that the poem was possibly 'written to support Edward III's coup of 1330' and in this denies the possibility of Edward II as author.[31] The coup of 1330 was when Edward III assumed personal power, overthrowing the *de facto* rule of his mother and Roger Mortimer. The text supports Valente's argument insofar that despite the poem only referring to the live king in his imprisonment, the references to the expectation of a cruel death, such as found in stanza three 'May the agony which my body endures be to my soul joy and mercy', point to it being a *post mortem* construction.[32] Yet the overthrow of Mortimer and Isabella succeeded because of the secrecy and element of surprise inherent in the proceedings rather than a massed popular uprising that would be suggested if it were to be promoted through

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Isabella: She Wolf of France, Queen of England (London 2005), 262, 'the poems that are attributed to Edward II'.
[27] Paul Studer, 'An Anglo-Norman Poem by Edward II, King of England', *Modern Language Review*, 16 (1921), 34-46 at 38, 'The tone of the poem, the line of arguments, the touches of deep personal feeling unmistakably stamp the work as genuine.'
[28] Tout, 'The Captivity', 50.
[29] Aspin, *Political Songs*, 93-104.
[30] Ibid, 96, 95.
[31] Valente, 'The Lament', 424.
[32] L.23-4, 'Ceo qe le corps soufre de torment / Soit a l'alme joie et merci'.

works such as this poem.[33] David Matthews, benefitting from Valente's work in recognising 'la Bise' in line 107 as an anagram of Isabel, suggests a date after the coup of 1330 as a more probable date of composition.[34] This view is based on the lines that follow this anagram, which warn Isabella that when 'the stag leaps in wrath and rends beasts with his antlers, let her take no care that she need no physician, so circumspect be her behaviour'.[35] The stag that leapt in wrath was Edward III and the beast he 'rends' was Mortimer, but his mother he spared of any punishment. This unpredictable outcome of the coup of 1330 fits too closely to the poem for it to have been composed in advance of the event. Matthews therefore concludes that the 'most likely case is that the poem is a '"prophecy" about that which has already happened', a position that seems to be the most likely.[36]

Alongside considerations of authorship are ideas of purpose. Valente proposes that '[t]he lament at one and the same time reflected and participated in contemporary views of the deposition, propaganda efforts by Isabel and Edward III, and religious and literary frameworks that channelled the reception and interpretation of perplexing events.'[37] Matthews shifts this understanding to suggest that the poem reflects the 'unmistakable end to the disorders and discontents of the previous three years' of the Isabella and Mortimer alliance.[38] These scholarly analyses recognise the poem as a contrived piece written with the purpose of either supporting or celebrating the overthrow of the Isabella and Mortimer alliance and the establishment of Edward III's personal rule. Yet neither of these authors closely focuses on

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[33] See: Caroline Shenton, 'Edward III and the Coup of 1330' in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J. S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, 2001), 13-34; Haines, *Edward II*, 214-18.

[34] David Matthews, *Writing to the King* (Cambridge, 2010), 104.

[35] L.109-12, 'Qe quant le serf se saut de ire / Et ove ses perches bestes purfent, / Garde soy q'ele n'eyt mester de mire / Tant se porte sagement.'

[36] Matthews, *Writing*, 101-7 at 105.

[37] Valente, 'The Lament', 428.

[38] Matthews, *Writing*, 106.

the image of Edward II in the poem; Valente considers his character concords with the 'acceptably pious and subservient' image promoted by Isabella and Mortimer and Matthews that he was 'transformed into everything he was not: penitent, uxorious, reflective'.[39] If Valente were correct it is hard to see how a character concocted by the Isabella and Mortimer regime could then be used to support the overthrow of the same regime. If Matthews were correct in identifying the projected character as totally incongruous with the contemporary perception of the former king then this would undermine the purpose of the poem. Tout's alternative suggestion that the poem was written 'to effect...his canonisation' is much closer to the reality.[40] However, this poem is not primarily concerned with the sanctity of Edward II. This within the poem is only an allusive idea. The author demonstrates this by the subtle manner in which the poem invokes the notion, it lies beyond the text but is available to inform its reading, should an audience choose to receive it. The poem rather than promoting Edward II as a martyred king capitalises on his established status, representing him as an authorative mouthpiece of the new political order of Edward III. The *Lament* explains and justifies the political re-ordering of authority after Edward III assumed personal rule, during the autumn of 1330. The thrust and purpose of this poem is to condemn Mortimer for the deposition and murder of an exalted personage and simultaneously to explain why Isabella should not be regarded as a co-conspirator in this heinous event.

The new perspective, established by Edward III, after the overthrow of the *de facto* rule of Isabella and Mortimer, was elucidated in the charges laid against Roger Mortimer and incorporated into the parliamentary rolls.[41] In these, Mortimer was condemned as the sole malignant force from which

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[39] Valente, 'The Lament', 430; Matthews, ibid, 105.
[40] Tout, 'The Captivity', 50.
[41] See: Haines, *Edward II*, 346-7, for a translated summary of the charges.

Edward III had freed himself. The thirteen charges concern only Mortimer, who, it was alleged, had usurped the royal authority, constrained the king to act against his better judgement, surrounded him with enemies and spies and ultimately claimed that the king's word should not be believed above his.[42] Furthermore, Mortimer was described as bearing all the responsibility for the murder of Edward II and his half brother Edmund.[43] There is, in these charges, no adverse mention of Isabella; she is referred to only in the eighth of the thirteen charges and therein as a victim of Mortimer's maliciousness.[44] By this, Isabella was silently exonerated from culpability for any of the events of the previous four years. However, the rehabilitation of Isabella's reputation may have proved a challenging task. Evidence of public criticism of her has already been alluded to in the previous chapter but besides these criticisms of her invasion and the imprisonment of her husband there was also censure of her treatment of her son once he became king. This takes the form of protest badges, a number of which survive, portraying Isabella as 'a queen trying to take the purse from a youth (the young, crownless king) whom she attacks with a stick.'[45] These representations, as Robinson concludes, are 'almost certainly a reference to Isabella's greed'.[46] Moreover, as Isabella is shown as crowned but the youth as uncrowned these badges also operate as political criticism of a regime that claims its authority from a figurehead but denies that figurehead any participation.

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[42] Ibid, items 1, 3, 12 and 13 'la parole le roi ne poeit creu a contraire de son dit'.

[43] Ibid, items 2 and 8.

[44] Ibid, 'He maliciously brought discord between the former king and the queen mother by suggesting that were she to come to him she would be killed by a knife or murdered in some other way. By this and other subtleties he prevented the queen from coming to her husband to the great dishonour of the king's father and the queen mother, thus threatening great future harm to the realm, which God forbid.'

[45] Robinson, 'Pilgrimage and Protest', 176, details four different styles of this badge. See: Illustration 2 at 256, for an example.

[46] Ibid. Haines, *Edward II*, 347, the ninth charge against Mortimer refers to the poverty of Edward III, 'He had taken for himself and his companions limitless royal treasure, in money and jewels, to the king's destruction, since he had nothing with which to pay or on which to live.'

The author of the *Lament* rises to the political challenge of absolving Isabella and condemning Mortimer in a multi-layered creation. Constructing, as Valente says, an example of writing that 'participates in a complex interplay in which meanings come from content and form, author and audience, with the text a meeting place of many voices, relying on shared knowledge and expectation for its interpretation.'[47] For this poem to succeed as a tool of political criticism it has to hold the speaker up as a person beyond reproach, whose comments are to be considered as emanating from an prestigious source. Evidence from the two manuscript copies of the poem demonstrates an aspect of Edward II that was thought to be important in this – his royal lineage. In the Royal MS, as T. M. Smallwood describes, the poem has been substituted, below an image of Edward II as a young king, for 'a poem of conventional praise in Latin', which has been 'scratched out'.[48] This representation of Edward II forms the last of a series of the nine post conquest kings of England. The kings are shown betokened with individual attributes (such as Henry III who is pictured alongside a representation of Westminster Abbey) and further identified by tables showing their wives and children. Each image is accompanied by an inscription, distich or poem. Through the positioning of this poem within the series of kings, Edward II's lineage is fully established. In the Longleat MS, the rubric informs any reader that the poem was written by King Edward, son of King Edward (De le Roi Edward le fiz Roi Edward, le chanson qe il fist mesmes). Therefore, both surviving copies of the *Lament* indicate that, integral to the appreciation of this poem is an understanding of exactly who is the subject and that he is not only a king but also a rightful king by direct descent from the previous king, the mighty Edward I. This suggests that the author of the poem was

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[47] Valente, 'The Lament', 437.
[48] T. M. Smallwood, 'The Lament of Edward II', *The Modern Language Review*, 68 (1973), 521-29 at 521.

keen to inculcate his writing with the authority of kingship, not only that of Edward II but also that of his predecessors. This factor adds a gravitas of purpose to the poem.

The 'content and form' of the poem indicates a further layer of meaning, integral to a full appreciation of the poem. The use of the term 'fortune' (Fortune) as the first word of line two, followed by 'luck' (Eure) as the first word of line three resonates with the enduringly popular writings of another prisoner, Boethius, author of *The Consolation of Philosophy*.[49] Boethius wrote this work while in prison, under sentence of death. He was afterwards recognised as a saint because of his reaction to his unwarranted imprisonment and expectation of execution. The overarching argument of the *Consolation* is that the superior value of spiritual grace over earthly blessings may only be fully recognised through suffering, sentiments that the *Lament* adumbrates. By presenting the *Lament* like the *Consolation* as autobiography, the claim is made that the circumstances leading to the authorship of both works was synonymous. Furthermore, the construction of the *Lament* conforms to a three quarters turn of the wheel of fortune, a notion closely associated with Boethius' *Consolation*.[50] The wheel of fortune was a metaphor of the caprices of life, possibly of ancient Greek origin, which became popular through its adoption as a governing motif of Boethius' *Consolation*.[51] Visual representations of the wheel of fortune portray a

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[49] Jacqueline Beaumont, 'The Latin Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*', in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed., Margaret Gibson (Oxford 1981), 278-305 at 300, considers that by the end of the twelfth century, '[t]he *De Consolatione* had found its rightful place and become incorporated into the fabric of medieval scholarship and literature'. John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford, 2003), 164, describes the impact of the text as 'immense, only Aristotle and Augustine had so great a direct influence over so wide a range of intellectual life.'

[50] Phillips, *Edward II*, 22, n.80, 'the idea of the wheel of fortune may lie behind the poem'.

[51] David M. Robinson, 'The Wheel of Fortune', *Classical Philology*, 41 (1946), 207-16 at 207, 'the metaphor of the Wheel of Fortune, I believe, began with the Greeks', at 215, 'I have

crowned king being tumbled from the top of the wheel to the bottom, while the wheel is turned by Fortune, always a female figure and sometimes blindfolded or veiled.[52] The juxtaposition of Edward's circumstances and the mental image of the wheel of fortune are pertinent, as Edward has been tumbled from the throne by a youngish woman, who was contemporaneously considered beautiful.[53] This metaphoric understanding also provides an explanation for Isabella's lack of punishment, after the coup of 1330. The poem, at this level, is suggesting Isabella as Fortune, blindly turning her wheel. The idea of the wheel of fortune does not cast negative aspersions upon the figure of fortune; she is merely fulfilling her role, which is why she is frequently portrayed as blinded. In this instance, the poem invites an understanding of Isabella as the blind agency that propels her husband from sinner to saint, thereby transforming her apparent bad deeds into beneficial spurs.

The poem, viewed as an exposition of the wheel of fortune, opens with Edward at the 'I have ruled' (Rengnaui) stage. The nature of the discourse then follows the downward trajectory dictated by the wheel of fortune metaphor; it starts at a low and as Edward II describes his current circumstances drops even lower. The lowest point is reached in stanza five (one third of the way through the poem). Here Edward has fully accepted that he is without rule and dedicates his body and soul to God to do what he wills with them.[54] Stanza ten shows Edward as having reached a higher

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discovered none [references to the Wheel of Fortune] between Boethius and the thirteenth century'.

[52] For example, see: St. John's College, Cambridge, MS. S. 30, f.70r, (English c.1320-1330). Fortune, as a young beautiful woman stands behind the wheel with her hands on the spokes. The four figures conform to the typology with the top one crowned and the lowest one almost nude. The verse that is given around the frame reads: Regnabo, Regno, Rengnaui, Sum Sine Regno (I will rule, I rule, I have ruled, I am without rule).

[53] Menache, 'Isabelle of France', 118.

[54] L.39-40, 'E de moy facez vostre talent / Car quoer et corps a vous otroy'.

position of spiritual grace, equivalent to the 'I will rule' (Regnabo) position on the wheel of fortune. However, as the poem was written after the death of Edward, this rule is not to be understood as earthly but heavenly. The final stanzas, therefore represents Edward's deepening perfection to culminate in stanza fifteen, when he is portrayed as worthy of the 'I rule' (regno) position. Here he attains the highest point on the wheel of fortune; he rules, no longer as a king on earth but as a martyr. In this the poem is arguing that Edward's trajectory has not been merely circular but ascendant, the high point he reaches at the end of the poem is not the one he previously occupied but a different one, of even greater prestige.

The *Lament*, besides having been modelled as an exposition of the wheel of fortune, draws upon the matter of Boethius' *Consolation*. Although it reveals its inspiration in the use of the terms fate, fortune and in the bemoaning of the loss of worldly-goods it does not seek to re-create the full complexities of the philosophical argument presented in the five books of Boethius' original. The purpose of this, within the poem, is to identify Edward II as a Boethius, wrongfully accused, imprisoned, reflecting upon his downfall while awaiting a very unpleasant death. The *Lament* alludes to the murder of Edward II from within the understanding that before his death he had reached the pinnacle of spiritual perfection. Therefore, his murder, like that of Boethius', becomes a martyrdom by which Edward, like Boethius, is transformed into a saint. The purpose of this parallel is not to secure Edward's sanctity but to provide a lens through which to view the roles of Isabella and Mortimer in the matter and to bring the poem's audience to the same point of view as promulgated after the coup of 1330.

The poem, viewed in this light, exonerates Edward III from any culpability in either the deposition or death of his father. It also affords an explanation of

the disparity in the punishment meted out to Edward's queen and Roger Mortimer, after the overthrow of their *de facto* rule. The poem supports the harsh treatment of Mortimer by casting him as Theodoric, the tyrannical ruler who persecuted Boethius and through this justifies his fate. Isabella, within the poem, is cast as Boethius' wife, whose enduring love was one of Boethius' dearest possessions.

The choice of Boethius as an analogue for Edward II is particularly apt as they share several aspects of circumstance that support the claim of their mutuality. They were of a similar age when imprisoned, both in their forties and both were married with two sons. Even the length of time that Boethius and Edward II spent in prison before their deaths concords at approximately nine months.[55] Both were condemned without being allowed to represent themselves before their accusers. As Boethius says 'here I am nearly five hundred miles away, condemned to death and to have my property confiscated, silenced, and with no opportunity to offer a defence'.[56] This statement, by Boethius closely reflects a retrospective view of Edward II's situation during his imprisonment at Berkeley. Moreover, both protest their innocence of the charges laid against them; Boethius says 'Fortune ought to be shamed...by the innocence of the accused' and in the final line of the *Lament* Edward describes himself as 'betrayed and falsely condemned'.[57] The alleged manner of Boethius' death, strangulation followed by clubbing, led to him being recognised as a Christian martyr and he became venerated as St Severinus.[58] Notions of the manner of Edward's death were still being

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[55] H. M. Barrett, Boethius: Some Aspects of His Times and Work (Cambridge, 1940), 53.
[56] Marenbon, *Boethius*, 164.
[57] Douglas C. Langston, *The Consolation of Philosophy: Authorative Text, Contexts, Criticism* (London, 2010), 10; L. 120-1, 'forjures falcement. / Explicit.'
[58] John Matthews, 'Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius' in Gibson, *Boethius*, 15-43 at 15 cites, the *Anonymous Valesii*, a fragmentary sixth century chronicle, account that claims that Boethius was tortured with a rope twisted around his neck, which caused his eyes to start

formed in the 1330's; following the pronouncement that his death was a murder compassed by Roger Mortimer, but contemporaneous ideas included strangulation and suffocation.[59]

Boethius wrote his *Consolation* while imprisoned, under sentence of death, by Theodoric king of the Ostrogoths, ruler of Boethius' native Italy, as part of his conquered Roman Empire, from 489.[60] This situation can be seen as paralleled in the understanding of the *Lament*. In the context of the poem, by viewing Mortimer as Theodoric it can be understood that Edward II was also held at the behest of an invading ruler.[61] Boethius' knowledge that he is to be executed is mirrored in the poem by Edward's expectation of his brutal execution, revealed in the line 'May the agony which my body endures'.[62] Therefore, both the *Consolation* and the *Lament* are presented as autobiographical works, produced while their authors were imprisoned, after having been falsely accused, knowingly awaiting their murderous deaths.[63]

The alignment of Mortimer to Theodoric serves as a platform for further political criticism of Mortimer, drawing upon information of the circumstances

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out of his head before he was clubbed to death; A. Kenny, *Medieval Philosophy*, ii (Oxford, 2005), 22.

[59] Haines, *Edward II*, 346, [in a translation of the charges against Roger Mortimer], he 'traitorously, feloniously and falsely murdered' Edward II, at 216, 'According to some of the chroniclers the substance of the indictment was...[that] he had consented to the suffocation of Edward II'. Ian Mortimer, 'Sermons of Sodomy: A Reconsideration of Edward II's Sodomitical Reputation', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, eds., G. Dodd and A. Musson (Woodbridge, 2006), 48-60 at 58, cites the Lichfield Chronicle of c.1333, as giving the cause of death as 'Murdered, possibly strangled ('iugulatus')'.

[60] Barrett, *Boethius*, 45.

[61] The construction of Roger Mortimer as a ruler is indicated in line 84 'they have chosen three kings' (Troys roys eslu en ount). The understanding of Mortimer as a conqueror lies outside the poem but is readily constructed from his role in the invasion of England.

[62] L.23, 'Ceo qe le corps soufre de torment'.

[63] J. Harpur, 'Fortune's Prisoner: An Introduction to the Poems of Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy', *The Poetry Ireland Review*, 85 (2006), 44-51 at 46, 'Disgraced, his family's future threatened, condemned to death, he writes a book which fulfils what Plato considered to be the philosopher's true task: to prepare himself for death.'

of Boethius, which lies outside the *Consolation* but is common to commentaries upon his text.[64] An example of this extension of allusion comes from the story of the murder of Odovacar. Odovacar was the king of Italy before Theodoric's invasion, after the invasion he had agreed to a power sharing arrangement with Theodoric. To celebrate this agreement Theodoric hosted Odovacar at a banquet where, after ensuring his victim's helplessness, he personally 'cleft him from the chin to the loins'.[65] The parallel that is being suggested from this story, relates to Mortimer's alleged treatment of Edward II. Edward's transfer from Kenilworth to Berkeley could be understood as Mortimer hosting Edward, owing to Mortimer's close connections with Berkeley. It was here, according to contemporary accounts, that Mortimer, after ensuring his victim's helplessness, had Edward II brutally murdered.[66] A similar allegation is made in the charges laid against Mortimer in 1330; he was accused of having broken the promise made to Edward II, which was that he would stay at Kenilworth 'at his ease and to be served as befitted such a lord'.[67] Instead of this, it was claimed that Mortimer 'by accroachment to himself of Royal power...ordered that he should be removed to Berkeley Castle where by him and his men he was traitorously murdered'.[68]

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[64] Alastair Minnis, 'Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, *Boethius*, 312-61 at 314, in reference to the commentary of Nicholas Trivet (or Trevet), a Dominican priest, written before 1307, accounts that this offered a fuller appreciation of the poem and knowledge of the life of Boethius. Over one hundred manuscripts of his commentary survive, frequently placed alongside Boethius' text.

[65] Barrett, *Boethius*, 22, 'A week after the compact had been made Theodoric entered Ravenna in state and invited Odovacar with his chief supporters to a banquet which was to celebrate the new friendship. While guests were still at table, two pretended petitioners clasped Odovacar's hands and soldiers hidden close by rushed out to kill him, but...could not bring themselves to strike a blow. Then Theodoric himself raised his sword, and...cleft him from the chin to the loins'.

[66] Brie, *Brut*, i, 243, 'þe Kyng went vnto his bed, and laye, and slept faste. And as þe Kyng lay and slepte... [the murderers] Laiden an Huge table oppon his Wombe, and wiþ men pressede and helde fast adoune þe iiij corners of þe table oppon his body'.

[67] Myers, Historical Documents, 53.

[68] Haines, *Edward II*, 346.

Further parallels between Mortimer and Theodoric also point to the *Lament* having been composed after the assumption of personal rule by Edward III. Boethius, in the *Consolation*, is encouraged by Lady Philosophy, his spiritual guide in his imprisonment, to find comfort in the continuing safety and love of Symmachus, his guardian in youth who later became his father-in-law.[69] Philosophy says, 'Your father-in-law, Symmachus, one of the finest men who ever lived, and one for whom you would gladly give your life, is still unharmed. That most wise and virtuous man lives in safety to lament the injuries you are suffering.'[70] This consolation was short lived. For within a short time of Boethius' execution, Theodoric had Symmachus executed, according to a near contemporary source, because he 'feared lest through grief for his son-in-law he should make some attempt against his rule.[71] The unwarranted killing by Theodoric, of a person close to the falsely condemned Boethius, for fear of a challenge to his rule can be seen as corresponding to Mortimer's execution of Edward II's half-brother, Edmund of Woodstock the earl of Kent. Kent had come to believe, some sources say with the encouragement of Mortimer's agents, that Edward II remained alive in 1330, held in Corfe Castle.[72] Edmund, in the light of this understanding, attempted to rescue his brother but was arrested, charged with treason and executed. Edward III was said to be 'wonder sorry' for the death of his uncle Edmund of Woodstock for which he blamed Mortimer.[73] Therefore it is not surprising to find that this incident formed the basis of another of the charges laid against Mortimer in 1330.[74]

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[69] Barrett, *Boethius*, 34.
[70] Langston, *Consolation*, 22.
[71] Barrett, *Boethius*, 54, from the *Anonymous Valesii*, which he describes [at 6] as a chronicle of the reign of Theodoric written 'within ten years of Boethius's execution.'
[72] Brie, *The Brut*, i, 263-67.
[73] Ibid, 267.
[74] Haines, *Edward II*, 347, Item 5, 'Mortimer knowing that the father of the king was dead and buried, with others deceived the earl of Kent, who desired to know the truth, into

Only six months after the execution of Edmund of Woodstock, Edward III launched his overthrow of Mortimer's regime, which resulted in Mortimer's execution and caused his alleged crimes to be exposed to public condemnation. This too finds an analogy in the commentaries on Boethius' *Consolation* for it was said that when Theodoric was at dinner a few days after the execution of Symmachus, he was served the head of a large fish.[75] This appeared to Theodoric as the head of Symmachus, staring at him, as a portent of his own impending death. Theodoric retired to his bed and summoned his physician to whom he 'revealed all that had happened' and 'wept for his sin against Symmachus and Boethius'. He died shortly thereafter. The implication of this, supported by the articles of accusation against Mortimer, is that his downfall too stemmed from his murder of two noble and innocent persons.

The implied and allusive criticism of Mortimer, afforded by the commentaries on the *Consolation* is matched with more direct criticism contained within the *Lament*. Edward II in reference to his son, Edward III, says, in the last lines of stanza eleven and the opening line of stanza twelve 'Jesus, son of Mary, preserve him from treason, which God confound. May God confound his enemies'.[76] The chief enemy of Edward III between his accession to the throne and his assumption of personal rule, in the view of the author of this poem, was Roger Mortimer. In 1330 Edward III communicated to Pope John XXII a secret sign, by which the pope would be able to identify letters whose contents were truly endorsed by the king; these and only these would

thinking he was still alive. And by every way he knew, by means of royal power he apprehended the said earl at the parliament of Winchester and had him put to death.'
[75] Barrett, *Boethius*, 59-60, the story was recorded by Procopius, a Byzantine historian 'a younger contemporary of Theodoric and Boethius'.
[76] L.87-9, 'Jhesu luy garde, le fiz Marie / De treson qe Dieu confund / Deux confund ses enemys'.

include the words 'Pater Sancte', written in the king's own hand.[77] This act reveals how constrained Edward III felt by the Mortimer and Isabella alliance. Moreover, a complaint against the level of control of the king is reflected in the first of the charges against Mortimer.[78] A more sinister note about the dangerous enmity of Mortimer was given in the *Scalacronica*, a later fourteenth century chronicle, which alleges that by October 1330, shortly before Edward III overthrew Mortimer, '[a] rumour had circulated that Mortimer...planned to usurp the kingdom'.[79] Therefore, it can be seen that in the last third of the poem, Edward II, who by this stage has been established as a cleansed soul, endorses his son's actions in executing Mortimer, who posed a real threat to his rule.

Another significant comparison that can be made between Boethius and Edward II is that of the scale of the fall from power. Boethius, already a renowned scholar, attained the rank of Consul in 510 under the rule of Theodoric. In 522, his two sons were made joint consuls, a singular mark of favour that Boethius recalls in the *Consolatione* as the 'culmination of good fortune'.[80] Shortly afterwards he himself was promoted as the *Magister Officiorum*, a post that rendered him 'chief of the whole Civil Service and head of the Palace officials'.[81] Yet he held this high position for less than a year before he was accused of treason and imprisoned.

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[77] Haines, *Edward II*, 215.
[78] Ibid, 347, Item 1, '...He had placed John Wyard and others around the king to spy out his deeds and words. To such an extent was the king surrounded by his enemies that he could do nothing of his own will without being under surveillance.'
[79] Ibid, 216.
[80] Barrett, *Boethius*, 46.
[81] Ibid, 'This office, both under the Empire and in the Ostrogothic State...included duties which in a modern state would be discharged by the Minister for Foreign Affairs...the Home Secretary and the Post-Master-General.'

These points of co-incidence provide the basis from which the author of the *Lament* constructs a positive image of the deposed Edward II. In the poem he is represented as a noble soul, rising above the oppressions of a tyrant. This conception challenges and opposes the image of the king projected by the Isabella and Mortimer alliance.[82] However, both these contrasting views are political constructs designed to lend credence to the perspective of the ruling body. Neither view has any claim to authenticity. Therefore, although the *Lament* invites the conflation of Boethius and Edward II and in doing so transposes positive understandings of Boethius onto the character of Edward, this is to serve the political purposes of his son. The aim is to form Edward II into a believable character, explain his actions, thoughts and feelings, in order that he is seen as a worthy king, who endorses his son's judgement. One of the positive attributes that could be transferred from Boethius to Edward II was the idea that just as Boethius had not accepted public office out of personal ambition but 'by the unanimous wish of all good men' in 'the interest of safeguarding justice', then Edward II too had accepted the throne out of duty rather than choice or inclination. Such an understanding would act as an explanation of Edward II's unkingly behaviour, famously described by Higden in his contemporary chronicle and echoed by others.[83] The allusion would suggest that Edward II would have preferred some other role to which he was more inclined. There is nothing in the *Lament* to elucidate what this other role may have been and perhaps, in the lack of any other suggestion, the audience is meant to understand that this would have been, like

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[82] See: Hutchinson, *Pliant King*, 169-70 for a translation of the articles of deposition in which he was termed 'incompetent', as demonstrating 'pride and obstinacy', 'greed' and 'cruelty and lack of character'.

[83] For a summary of such criticism see: Phillips, *Edward II*, 9-15; Childs, *Vita*, 69, 'Oh! If he had practised the use of arms, he would have exceeded the prowess of King Richard. Physically this would have been inevitable, for he was tall and strong, a handsome man with a fine figure. But why linger over this description of him? If only he had given to arms the attention that he expended on rustic pursuits, he would have raised England on high; his name would have resounded through the land.'

Boethius, that of literary composition, for which the poem itself offers evidence.

The poem disputes the story of voluntary resignation of the throne promulgated by the Isabella and Mortimer alliance. In the poem's account, Edward II was brought down by 'Their false faith in parliament'.[84] This, within the poem, could refer to, either or both, the false claim made to parliament about Edward's voluntary resignation or to the accusations against Edward II presented to parliament as the *Forma deposicionis*.[85] The reference to either or both these stratagems links Edward II to Boethius, for the accusations against him were also made to the equivalent of parliament (the senate) and by persons of 'villainy'.[86] Boethius describes his accusers as 'men banished by royal decree for their many corrupt practices', a description that can be reflected back onto Roger Mortimer.[87] Mortimer having opposed Edward II in the civil war of 1321-2 was sentenced to death, as a contrariant. However, '[f]or once Edward relented' and the following day the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, he was then secured in the Tower of London.[88] He escaped from the Tower in August 1323 and made his way to France, in November Edward II asked the king of France to banish him from his domains, to which he acceded.[89]

The linking of Boethius to Edward II also explains one of the most puzzling aspects of the *Lament*, that of his alleged enduring love for his treacherous wife, Isabella. The poem's structure offers one strand of interpretation of the relationship between Isabella and Edward but the melding of the characters

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[84] L.19, 'Lour faus fai en parlement'.
[85] Valente, 'Deposition', 876, 878-81.
[86] Langston, *Consolation*, 10.
[87] Ibid, 9.
[88] Phillips, *Edward II*, 412-13.
[89] Ibid, 459-61.

of Edward and Boethius affords another. The mutual love of Boethius and his wife is reflected upon by Lady Philosophy who lists this love among Boethius' 'most precious possessions' that cannot be stolen by misfortune.[90] She goes on to describe his wife as

> Your wife, so gracious, so chaste, so like her father in excellence of character, still lives though now she is weary of life and goes on only for your sake. Even I must concede that in her case your happiness is greatly marred since her sorrow for your misfortunes is killing her.[91]

Similar sentiments, albeit tempered by some regard for very different circumstances, permeate the *Lament*. In stanza eight Edward mourns his lost love 'Isabel, the fair, I loved so much, but now the spark of true love is extinguished; therefore my joy has fled, as happens with many a man.'[92] However, the loss of Isabel's love for him does not prevent him wishing that she would not be harmed when 'when the stag leaps in wrath and rends beasts with his antlers'.[93] By endowing Edward II with these sentiments, the author of the poem is serving two purposes. Firstly, he is further evidencing the mutuality of Boethius and Edward and secondly he is explaining a perplexing aspect of the aftermath of Edward III's coup, that Isabel was treated so lightly compared to Mortimer. The view derived from the narrative of the *Lament* is that Edward III spared his mother because his father loved her, an explanation as plausible as any offered in the circumstances.

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[90] Langston, *Consolation*, 22.

[91] Ibid.

[92] L.61-4, '[Isa]beux tant amay la bloye / Mes ore l'estencele est esteint / De fyn amur; pur ceo ma joie / S'en est ale com est de meint.' Smallwood, 'The Lament', 523, finds a different reading in the Royal MS, 'Dieux! come bien amay la bloye' and argues [at 525] that 'R's line must be preferred. It has never been shown that *Beux* was a known pet-form of *Isabel*'. However if Royal's reading is preferred then the poem reads as if Edward was disavowing his love of God, which is at odds with the overall conception of the poem.

[93] L.109-10, 'Qe quant le serf se saut de ire / Et ove ses perches bestes purfent'.

The *Lament* does not deny that Edward II was forced to abdicate, but by indicating that Edward comes, not only to accept this, but also to appreciate the necessity of this for his personal salvation, it effectively reshapes the event from disgrace to spiritual opportunity.[94] The deposition is presented as the necessary penance for Edward's misdeeds; emphasising that earthly glory is of little matter, particularly if it is bought at the cost of heavenly approbation. It represents Edward II as coming to share this view and becoming desirous of spending the rest of his life in the service of God. The *Lament* refers to only one of Edward's political sins, as detailed at the time of the deposition, which is that he was of evil counsel (mavoisement consaillez).[95] An allegation that was fundamental to all six of the accusations listed in the document of charges. Yet the *Lament* subverts this imputation and places the evil counsel on those to whom he was sworn to listen.[96]

This lack of concern for Edward's sins of misrule supports the contention that, at least in this source, it was accepted that the forfeit of the crown expunged all wrongdoing associated with the 'body politic'. The equation of dispossession of the throne to the penance imposed by God for the crimes associated with Edward's kingship is fundamental to this piece. This notion fully accords with the contemporary view of the acceptance and performance of appropriate penance as engendering total absolution. Moreover, the forfeit of the crown exposed the inherent sacral nature of Edward II who, as one of

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[94] L.18, 'granted I well deserved it' (E duint qe bien l'ai deservi), L.98, 'My heart does not repine in regretting earthly honour' (De terrien honur regreter), L.73, 'To serving Him I will turn my mind' (De luy servir mettray m'entente).

[95]Chrimes and Brown, *Select Documents*, 37, 'This document is not an official record but was probably drawn up by William of Mees, secretary to John Stratford, bishop of Winchester, acting treasurer from 14 November, 1326'.

[96] L.30, 'A lor consayl estoie jurez'.

the Lord's anointed, stood in a superior position in the spiritual hierarchy.[97] Such stories of redemption are a common trope in hagiography, morality plays and sermons but this one is intensified by it being a king who is making this journey. To fall from the high position of king to prisoner and yet to respond positively to such adversity and find, through these trials, a way of reaching Christian perfection suggests a truly laudatory model of behaviour. Such an understanding would not only permit Edward II to be reconciled within the cohort of noble English kings but also to add lustre to it. Although the *Lament* was not written as a hagiography, it contains elements of this literary form.[98] Coming most close to this in its final line which describes Edward II as 'betrayed and falsely condemned', thus aligning his situation, not only with that of Boethius but also with that of Christ's.[99]

The status and date of this poem has implications for an evaluation of the development of Edward II's posthumous reputation. The poem was written in Anglo-Norman, which was frequently the language of choice for poetry and romance.[100] As Valente points out, such literature 'was produced for and by the elite of English society.'[101] Beyond this she finds that, the use of the Anglo-Norman language, by the date of the *Lament*, was an indicator of cultural aspiration, 'used in London, in great noble households, to a lesser extent among the lesser nobility and gentry, and in monasteries and

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[97] For a consideration of the contemporary understanding of the spiritual status of kings, see: John A. Watt, *The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century* (New York, 1965).

[98] See: Aviad M. Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 183-206.

[99] L.120, 'forjuges falcement'.

[100] See: M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford, 1993), 200-23. For a specific example see: Robin F. Jones, 'An Anglo-Norman Rhymed Sermon on Shrift', *Modern Philology*, 79 (1982) 347-58 at 347, Where the sermon is described as, 'written for a general audience of "lais et clers"'.

[101] Valente, 'The Lament', 423.

schools.'[102] This understanding, allied with the belief that the poem's purpose was to endorse the political re-alignment introduced by Edward III after his coup of 1330, suggests an author closely connected with courtly if not royal circles. Late 1330 is the earliest date at which the poem could have been written and a date of composition soon afterwards, when its political pertinence would be most appreciated, seems likely. Isabella was kept 'by the King's order' at Windsor, after the coup, until March 1332.[103] Thereafter she was allowed to live, under her own authority, at Castle Rising in Norfolk.[104] The eldest daughter of Edward III, born June 1332, was called Isabella in honour of her grandmother. Queen Isabella's rehabilitation was certainly completed by June 1338, when she is recorded as being with the king and court at Pontefract.[105] It is possible that this poem was written to smooth the way for Isabella's re-introduction into public life as the king's mother and the genesis of his claim to the throne of France, a matter of considerable political importance.[106]

That only two contemporary copies of the poem are known cannot be assumed to indicate a limited circulation as neither of these is an autograph and neither is a direct derivative of the other.[107] The indication within the poem that it was conceived as a 'chaunson' promotes the understanding that this work was intended to have been disseminated orally, through the minstrel or jongleur tradition.[108] This notion would explain the narrow

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Paul Doherty, *Isabella and the Strange Death of Edward II* (London, 2003), 174.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] See: Michael Bennett, 'Isabelle of France, Anglo-French Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange in the Late 1350s' in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J. S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, 2001), 215-25, *passim*, for a discussion of Isabella's ongoing political significance.
[107] Smallwood, 'The Lament', 527.
[108] L.106, 'Go swiftly hence my song' (Va t'en chaunson ignelement). Oral transmission is also suggested in the rubric of the Longleat manuscript, which refers to the poem as a 'chanson'.

survival pattern of the poem as the small rolls of repertoire used by minstrels very rarely survive.[109] Moreover, the minstrel tradition was associated with the higher echelons of society, further supporting the idea that this piece was composed for elite society, yet once composed this would not have prevented it being disseminated more widely.

Turning now to consider the *Fieschi Letter*, this document, shaped as a letter also presents an image of Edward II as achieving a state of spiritual grace through penance and pilgrimage rather than by a martyr's death. The document itself is surrounded by several controversies, concerning the credibility of the story told, the motives of the reputed author and whether it was ever delivered to its imputed addressee, Edward III. The document survives as a single copy, in a cartulary of unrelated matter, of the bishops of Maguelone.[110] It has no known circulation prior to its discovery in 1877 by Alexandre Germaine, Dean of the Faculty of Letters at Montpelier.[111] It is known as the *Fieschi Letter* from its self-attributed author Manuel de Fieschi and as the letter refers to its author as 'pape notarius' rather than bishop the date of the original writing is assumed to be between 1336 and 1343. This is based on the time accounted for in the letter, calculated from the date of Edward's supposed death and the date at which Fieschi assumed the bishopric.[112]

The arguments around this letter are significant and continue to divide historians. Phillips, most recently, takes a carefully nuanced position, considering that the letter 'is almost certainly genuine' and that 'Manuel

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[109] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 143; Andrew Taylor, 'The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 43-73.
[110] The letter is now found at, Montpelier, Archives departmentales d'Herault, G 1123, fol.86r.
[111] Cuttino and Lyman, 'Where is', 526 and n. 22.
[112] Ibid, 529.

Fieschi almost certainly did meet someone who either claimed to be or thought he was Edward II.'[113] This view implies that while he does not believe that Edward II survived beyond September 1327, he does believe that Manuel Fieschi wrote the letter in good faith. Yet this argument is built on shaky foundations. Certainly, Manuel Fieschi was a papal notary at Avignon between 1329 and 1343, who then became bishop of Vercelli; certainly, he was well placed to have access to the verifiable details incorporated into the letter; but would a papal notary ever have written to the king of England in a manner that fails to observe the accepted form for such correspondance? This is particularly unusual as 'the art of writing letters (*ars dictandi* or *dictaminis*)' had long been a required subject of study 'for those preparing for careers in ecclesiastical or secular government.'[114] Moreover, in the case of notaries, the requirement of knowledge of the *ars dictaminis* was heightened to become, as William Patt finds, 'mandatory'.[115]

This is the fundamental issue with the letter: is it a copy of a genuine letter from the reputed author to King Edward III? All subsequent arguments of purpose rest on this point. There are three possibilities for this letter: it could be an authentic copy of a *bona fide* letter or it could be a forgery, or a fake. The point of differentiation between a fake and a forgery, in this discussion, is that a forgery would suggest that this was a letter sent to Edward III, with only the author's name being used fraudulently. A fake however implies that the whole conception is false, a pseudo approximation of a real letter.[116] This

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[113] Phillips, *Edward II*, 591.

[114] Giles Constable, 'Dictators and Diplomats in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Medieval Epistolography and the Birth of Modern Bureaucracy', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), 37-46 at 37.

[115] William Patt, 'The Early "Ars Dictaminis" as Response to a Changing Society', *Viator*, 9 (1978), 133-55 at 135.

[116] Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries* (London and Toronto, 2004), 3, 'Adaptations of documentary form abound in medieval written culture, texts that could serve

analysis of the text suggests that it is a fake, using the name of Fieschi to add gravitas to an account, never directly intended for the king. From this position the possibility arises that this 'letter' was conceived as a veiled political attack upon Edward III, not a personal missive. It can be read as assuming (as David Mathews says of another letter supposedly written to Edward III) a 'rhetorical ploy' intended 'to enlist other readers to a point of view that is given authority' by the framing.[117] This is a mode of communication that, he argues, 'transmits a sense of privilege to readers by letting them feel that they are reading something addressed to someone very important.'[118]

The first indication that this document is a fake comes from the lack of an accepted form of address. The appropriate address, before 1340, would have been Edwardus Dei Gracia Rex Anglie, dominus Hibernie et dux Aquitannie. By a writ of April 16 1340, Edward III assumed the title of king of France and dropped the title Duke of Aquitaine. He then dropped the title of king of France, after the treaty of Bretigny in 1360, only to resume it in June 1369.[119] For a papal notary, well versed in appropriate etiquette, to open a letter to a king without including his titles is unthinkable.[120] While it could be argued that a papal notary might not have used the title of king of France, as none of the popes ever endorsed his claim to the throne, none of them disputed his title of king of England.[121] This lack of the use of appropriate

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parodic, satiric, or pious purposes, or all three, but which were not, in a legal sense, forgeries.'
[117] Matthews, *Writing*, 112, in relation to a critical political tract known as *Speculum Regis Edwardi III*.
[118] Ibid.
[119] C. R. Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), 35.
[120] A papal nuncio addressed King Edward III, in 1374 as 'Au Roy d'Angleterre, nostre tres cher et tres redoubte seigneur', Edouard Perroy, 'The Anglo-French Negotiations at Bruges 1374-1377' *Camden Miscellany*, XIX (1952), i-xix, 1-95 at 1.
[121] Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War*, 2nd Ed. (Basingstoke, 2003), 116; Karsten Ploger, *England and the Avignon Popes* (London, 2005), 41, notes 'Benedict XII's adverse reaction

titles may indicate the most basic message of this document; not only is Edward III not king of France, even his status as king of England can be challenged as his father still lives and his deposition, by his adulterous and murderous wife, an act of treason which effectively disinherits her heirs.[122]

This document also lacks any salutatation or greeting. This should set the appropriate tone of the letter, indicate the social standing of the receiver in relation to the sender and indicate the expectation of the sender.[123] For example '[a] request to redress a grievance...was addressed to Your Justice, for revenge to Your Honour, and for money to Your Generosity'.[124] As Giles Constable states '[a] trained letter writer knew the suitable terms of salutation and the correct order of names, which reflected the respective social and political positions of the writer and the addressee.'[125] In light of this, the phrase that does open this letter is highly inappropriate for a papal notary addressing a monarch, 'In the name of the Lord, Amen' (In nomine Domini amen).[126] This stark phrase is devoid of humility or fitting reverence. It places the author of the letter as spiritually superior to the receiver, in a position that shapes the writer as a didactic disseminator of God's truth, preaching to the un-enlightened and sinful. This stance, although incongruous for a genuine discourse between a notary and a king, concords with the notion of this letter as critical of Edward III. Any audience for this

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when first receiving a letter with Edward's new seal [showing the arms of France and England] in early March 1340.'

[122] W. R. Jones, 'The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War', *Journal of British Studies*, 19 (1979), 18-30 at 28, this can be seen as a response to the English view of Philip VI (1328-1350), first king of the Valois line, 'who was never dignified with a royal title, was described as a "usurper" and a "most hateful persecutor" of the English.' R. De Aragon, 'The growth of secure inheritance in Anglo-Norman England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 8 (1982), 381-91 at 384, 'Throughout the middle ages, forfeiture was the common penalty for treasonous behaviour of men bound to the king by homage'.

[123] Patt, "Ars Dictaminis", 152.

[124] Constable, 'Dictators', 42.

[125] Ibid.

[126] *Fieschi Letter*, Latin text hereafter: Cuttino and Lyman, 'Where is', 537-38.

document could imagine themselves, through this, as witnessing the scene of a mighty monarch being reproached by his revered father.

The second sentence also demonstrates the unlikelihood of having actually been written by Fieschi in that it says that the letter's contents are based on the confession of Edward III's father. The Lateran Council of 1215, that instituted obligatory annual confession, also pronounced severe penalties upon priests who revealed any sins disclosed in confession.[127] Yet this document openly records Edward II's alleged confession of a mortal sin, the unprovoked murder of a sleeping porter. There is no conceivable benefit to Fieschi in his supposed admission of his source of information; even more such a disclosure would place him in a vulnerable situation, as a transgressor of canon law. This putative voice from the confessional seems a deliberate device intended to add significantly to the aura of truth that the composer is endeavouring to secure.

The quality of the Latin of the letter is also considered inferior to that which could be expected of a papal notary, as Haines comments 'the style is far from fluent'.[128] It falls far short of the 'cursus curiae Romanae', a style that it is argued would have become second nature to those that were trained to practice it.[129] A defence that has been raised against this criticism is that the Latin of this document reflects the contemporary Latin as written in Genoa, where the Fieschi family originated.[130] It can however be argued that rather than this being evidence for the letter's legitimacy, it points to the place of

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[127] F. Graf, 'Confession, Secrecy and Ancient Societies' in *Religion in Cultural Discourse*, eds. B. Luchesi and K. von Stuckrad (Germany, 2004), 259-72 at 260, from canon 21, 'and the priest shall be discreet and careful...and we decree that, whoever will reveal a sin told him with the aim of penance, he shall not only be deposed from his priestly office but relegated to a closed monastery for perpetual punishment.'

[128] Haines, '*Edwardus Redivivus*', 65.

[129] Constable, 'Dictators', 43.

[130] Haines, *Edward II*, 221.

composition and explains why the name of Manuel Fieschi, as a papal notary, was well known enough to be adopted.[131]

The absence of a dating clause also indicates that this document is a fake. Such an absence affords the letter the quality of enduring, timeless truth. This quality although highly effective as a tool of political criticism further undermines the conception of this letter as written 'with my own hand' (manu mea propria scripsci [sic]) by a papal notary, versed in law and due form.[132] Indeed as John McGovern records in his study of a notary working in Genoa, he was 'insistent upon the clarity of detail' carefully noting 'circumstances of time, place [and] person', none of which are apparent in the *Fieschi Letter*.[133] The absence of a dating clause was also one of the grounds on which papal canonists, looking for forged documents, would challenge the authenticity of a document.[134] A further criticism of the letter lies in the odd spelling of English place names, for example 'Gesosta', presumed to be Chepstow and 'Chilongurda' for Kenilworth.[135] This is despite Fieschi being '[n]o stranger to England', in that he held 'various English benefices and was a confidant of the Salisbury chapter'.[136]

The closing of this document also belies this as a *bona fide* letter. The phrase that describes Edward II as 'praying God for you and other sinners' (Deum pro vobis et aliis peccatoribus) is pointedly rude. The author in this excludes himself from the sinners, for whom Edward II is praying, by the use of the

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[131] Genoa supported France during the Hundred Years' War, Genoese crossbowmen featured prominently at the Battle of Crecy (1346) and suffered great losses, see: A. F. Burne, *The Hundred Years War* (London, 2005), 109-18.

[132] Patt, "Ars Dictaminis", 151, 'A notary...needed at least some legal training.'

[133] John McGovern, 'The Documentary Language of Medieval Business AD 1150-1250', *The Classical Journal*, 67 (1972), 227-39 at 230.

[134] Hiatt, *Medieval Forgeries*, 26.

[135] Haines, '*Edwardus*', 68, 65.

[136] Ibid.

pronominal form 'you...and other' instead of the usual 'us...and all'. This construct divides the group of sinners from the author and places Edward III as the foremost sinner. Moreover, as this denunciation is presented as the view of Edward II, who in this document is represented as attaining righteousness, the castigation is heavily freighted. The penultimate sentence then returns to the matter of convincing that this is a genuine document, reading 'In testimony of which I have caused my seal to be affixed for the consideration of Your Highness' (In quorum testimonium sigillum, contemplacione vestre dominacionis, duxi apponendum).[137] This is a clever double bluff; the detailed allusion to attaching a seal (in itself unusual) upholds the idea that the original letter was legitimised with the seal of Manuel Fieschi, while also explaining its absence on a copy.[138] Moreover, the phrasing purportedly invites Edward III to consider the seal rather than the narrative, implying that the seal will prove the veracity of the whole.[139] This

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[137] References to the seal more often note the date and place of writing as 'Don' souz le signet que vous savez a nostre chastel de Wyndesoure le viij jour de Novembre', Pierre Chaplais, 'Some Documents Regarding the Fulfilment and Interpretation of the Treaty of Bretigny (1361-1369)', Camden Miscellany, 19 (1952), 1-84 at 10, from a 1361 letter of Edward III.

[138] Hiatt, Medieval Forgeries, 25, 'it is important to note the physicality and the iconographic potency of the seal, a manifestation and representation of centralised power which is literally affixed to a text.'

[139] See: C. T. Wood, 'Where is John the Posthumous?', in Documenting the Past, eds. G. P. Cuttino, J. S. Hamilton and P. J. Bradley (Woodbridge, 1989), 99-118, for a story with a very similar plot, of bodily substitution to escape a murder attempt, false burial and later emergence, that originated in Genoa around this time. This story too is based on evidence from the confessional. The story in this case was that in 1316 the posthumous child of Louis X (John I) was swapped with the child of his wet nurse, Marie. It alleges that this child was murdered and buried as John I, while the real John I grew up in ignorance of his real identity. The dying confession of his mother was passed to a priest who was to travel to Italy to seek the boy. This priest reached Genoa and realising he was dying wrote to a 'Nicholas, tribune of the Roman people' [identified as Nicholas Cola, papal senator]. Cola then, allegedly convinced of the truth of the story, wrote a charter which concludes 'in attestation of its truth we have sealed it with our seal of a large star with eight small stars around it, in the centre of which appear the arms of Holy Church and of the Roman people'. Cola was murdered four days after the alleged date of the composition of the charter in October 1354 [see: G. L. Williams, Papal Genealogy (USA, 1998), 44-5]. The charter was not made public until after the battle of Poitiers in 1356. The charter survives in the Library of Congress, Washington, but notably without the described seal or any marks suggesting that a seal had ever been attached.

seems a deliberate strategy, for a document for which no original ever existed. A close examination of the seal, checking for both its integral authenticity and that it had not been transferred from another document, was among the measures introduced by Innocent III to detect forgeries.[140] Indeed the concern over forgeries was so extreme that guidelines for their detection were produced; however as Alfred Hiatt points out these instructions 'could equally serve forgers as manuals for evading detection'.[141] The final sentence debases Edward III, reading 'Your Manuele de Fieschi, notary of the lord pope, your devoted servant' (Vester Manuel de Flisco, domini pape notarius, devotus servitor vester). The un-mediated 'your' that starts the sentence denotes an unwarranted familiarity and implies an equality of status between the sender and the recipient.[142] This is then followed by the name and status of the supposed sender of the letter, underlining his status and authority. The absence of a similar reference to Edward III ensures that this becomes the only status and authority that is acknowledged in the document. This construction renders the final 'your devoted servant' an ironic barb.

A number of writers have investigated Manuel Fieschi's family and career.[143] This has helped form their varying opinions of the genuineness of the document. Those who believe the *Fieschi Letter* to be a genuine communication from Manuel Fieschi to Edward III also seek a motive for the communication between these people. Both Paul Doherty and Ian Mortimer consider that Fieschi's motive was blackmail, but to differing ends - Doherty deeming it for the personal preferment of Fieschi and Mortimer, to force

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[140] Hiatt, Medieval Forgeries, 25.
[141] Ibid.
[142] The already cited letter of 1374 [see n.120] mediates the 'Your' as 'Vos humbles chapellains', Perroy, 'Negotiations', 3.
[143] *Cuttino and Lyman*, 'Where is', 529; Haines, '*Edwardus*', 68-9; Haines, *Edward II*, 223; Phillips, *Edward II*, 589-91.

Edward III to pay outstanding debts to Genoa, Fieschi's home city and nearby to where Edward II was said to be living.[144] Yet the most crucial aspect of blackmail, the leverage - the consequence to the blackmailed if they do not do what the blackmailer demands - is non-existent. None of the 'evidence' in this document would change the political landscape. Even if Edward II had evaded the murder attempt, he was still a deposed king, whose son had been crowned while he lived. Edward II, as constructed in this document, voices no desire to return as king, indeed he is made to appear as completely satisfied with his life as a hermit. The document itself claims that Pope John XXII knew the full story and endorsed Edward II's desire to be a hermit. Although John XXII died in 1334, it is difficult to imagine that another pope would take direct action over this situation, on which John XXII had very firmly pronounced.[145] Moreover, there is nothing in the document itself that drives towards any motive; no hopes or desires are expressed either on behalf of Edward II or by the author. Therefore it has to be concluded that this document does not form an attempt at blackmail. What this document does portray is the central role of Queen Isabella in the proposed murder. This condemnation of her adds to the argument that this document is a defence against the claim to the French throne mounted by Edward III. For upon the death of Charles IV, Queen Isabella's last surviving brother, in 1328, Edward III was the closest male descendent of the Capetian line. Although a claim was made on behalf of Edward III at this time, this, according to Anne Curry, failed as '[t]he claims of a foreign-born, untried youth with a notoriously unpopular mother', and Philip VI, the first Valois king, was crowned.[146]

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[144] Doherty, *Isabella*, 212; Ian Mortimer, *The Greatest Traitor* (London, 2003), 259.
[145] Phillips, *Edward* II, 570, 'On 5 September 1330 the pope wrote to both Isabella and Edward III, ... he expressed his unease very forcibly [about the claim that Edmund of Woodstock had persuaded him that Edward II was still alive] and made it clear that he did not and never had believed that Edward II was still alive'.
[146] Curry, *Hundred Years*, 40.

Isabella's 'notorious' unpopularity was added to by her having been implicated in the scandal that could, retrospectively, be construed as having robbed the French people of a continuing line of Capetian kings. During a visit to the French court of her father Philip IV in 1314, her three brother's wives were all 'discovered' as engaging in adulterous affairs and sentenced to life imprisonment and their lovers executed.[147] Isabella was implicated as the discoverer of these affairs; she allegedly had, on a previous visit, given purses to her sisters in law and when she had seen these purses in the hands of two knights, Phillipe and Gautier d'Aunay, had secretly informed her father of her concerns.[148] Isabella's father died shortly after the scandal and her eldest brother took the throne as Louis X; he remarried but his posthumous son, John I, survived for only five days. The next brother took the throne as Philip V, his wife, although one of those accused of adultery, had been found not guilty and returned to court but only daughters survived their father. When Philip V died in 1322, the last brother was crowned as Charles IV and it was only at this point, fourteen years later, that he had his marriage annulled and remarried. His second wife died after premature childbirth and his third wife produced only two daughters, one posthumously.

It is only the claim to the authority of a papal notary that infuses this letter with the aura of credibility. Papal notaries were legally held in high regard, their role being to 'confirm and attest the truth of any deeds or writings in

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[147] Phillips, *Edward II*, 222.

[148] Ibid, Phillips is at pains to point out that most accounts of this story are recorded 'well after the event' but does allow that a reference in a 'near contemporary source' which says of Isabella in 1313, 'through her many things were later revealed and disclosed in France' may be a reference to this matter. For a more detailed consideration of this situation see: E. Brown, 'Diplomacy, Adultery, and Domestic Politics at the Court of Philip the Fair: Queen Isabelle's Mission to France in 1314', in *Documenting the Past*, 53-84.

order to render them authentic'.[149] This can be seen in the case of Oxford University, which in 1397 used a supposed bull of Boniface IX to support its claim of exemption from jurisdiction; the bull was denounced as a forgery as 'it lacked an authentic seal, or the subscription of a public notary.'[150] Under canon law, a notary's evidence carried the same weight as two witnesses, furthermore 'the signed statement of a notary is unchallengeable evidence in a court of law.'[151] I suggest that this is why the name of Fieschi was invoked, at the point in his career that lent most plausibility to the contents. Therefore, it can be argued, the date of 1343, when Fieschi was appointed as a bishop and ceased to be a papal notary, does not supply a reliable *terminus ante quem*.

Bishop Stubbs, who re-printed Germaine's transcription of the letter in 1883, offered three theories; the first was that 'it was part of a political trick devised at the beginning of the great war to throw discredit on Edward III.'[152] This view was echoed by Tout, who conjectured, '[w]as it a cunning effort of some French enemies to discredit the conqueror of Crecy?'[153] The 'great war' referred to by Stubbs is the Hundred Years War, the causes of which are a complex mix of feudal, dynastic and political issues. The coronation of Philip VI in 1328, when it could be considered that Edward III had a better claim to the throne of France, made the matter of homage a prime concern. Edward III as Duke of Aquitaine owed homage to the king of France and the king of France as overlord of Aquitaine could intervene in the governance of the fiefdom. Aquitaine (or Gascony) was a valuable asset,

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[149] *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd Ed, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford, 1974), 982; Ploger, *Avignon Popes*, 74-5, discusses the role and careers of English notaries at Avignon.
[150] Hiatt, Medieval Forgeries, 74.
[151] *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 982.
[152] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, cviii.
[153] Tout, 'The Captivity', 39.

worth £13,000 a year in 1324.[154] In March 1337, Philip VI confiscated Aquitaine, citing breach of fealty by Edward III.[155] This act heralded the start of the sporadic conflict that is now known as the Hundred Years' War. Edward III then made claim to the French throne and three years later formally assumed the title. This meant, as Michael Prestwich argues, that '[n]o longer would Edward III appear as a rebellious vassal, disregarding the terms of his homage; rather, as a claimant to the throne he was the equal of Philip VI.'[156] Yet Edward III's contention went beyond asserting equality, he embarked on a campaign of propaganda that proclaimed both his legal and moral superiority over Philip VI. In an open letter to the people of France of 1340, he invited them to recognise his superior claim to the throne of France, which he said had been 'usurped' (intruserit) by Philip VI.[157] The basis of Edward III's superior claim to the throne of France was, he said, transmitted through his mother who was sister of the last rightful king. Moreover, the whole of his argument was enclosed within the frame of understanding that in order to obey God, which as a true Christian king Edward sought to do, he had to take the throne of France, as this was what God had ordained. The negative thrust of the letter was to persuade the French people that, in contrast to Edward III, Philip VI had 'violated the foundation of kingship by acting against justice' had 'seized the throne through force...disobeyed God, and...did not possess the qualities of a true Christian king.'[158] The contentions of this letter can be seen as being countered and subverted in the *Fieschi Letter*, promoting the understanding that this too is a piece of propaganda relating to the fundamentals of the

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[154] Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards* (London, 1981), 167.
[155] Denise Baker, ed. Inscribing the Hundred Years' War in French and English Cultures (New York, 2000), 4.
[156] Prestwich, *Edwards*, 170.
[157] T. J. Grade, 'Warfare, the royal image, and national identity: Succession and propaganda during the Hundred Years War, 1337-1422', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Notre Dame, 2006), 82 and n.51.
[158] Ibid, 83.

dispute over the crown of France and the posturing of Edward III. The *Fieschi Letter* can be read as implying that Edward III was not 'a true Christian king, blessed by God with a superior hereditary title and justice on his side, fighting for his rights against the usurping, unchristian Valois dynasty.'[159]

One of the other controversies that arises from this letter is that it cannot be reconciled with the accounts of Edward's death at Berkeley (in whatever manner). This has given rise to wide ranging investigations of the plausibility of the competing accounts of the death or survival of Edward II, but despite intense debate, the matter remains unresolved.[160] No attempt is going to made here to evaluate these conflicting discourses. Rather this analysis will suggest that the apparently irreconcilable accounts can be regarded as branches of a similarly founded belief system. Some of those who believed that he had died at Berkeley comprehended this as the death of a noble, penitent individual whose death could be shaped as martyrdom, given the appropriate cues. An alternative strand of consideration possibly fuelled by reports of the escape of July 1327 and substantiated by the execution of Edward II's half-brother, Edmund earl of Kent, in 1330, was that Edward II had escaped death in Berkeley Castle.

The *Fieschi Letter*, like the *Lament*, witnesses the spiritual transformation of Edward II. In the letter, this effect is achieved through the account of his

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[159] Ibid, 61. Another 'story' that originated around this time is that of Edward III raping the Countess of Salisbury, a conceptualisation that discredited the image of Edward III as possessing sound morals. See: A. Gransden, 'The Alleged Rape by Edward III of the Countess of Salisbury', *EHR*, 87 (1972), 333-44. Her summary of the effectiveness of the rape story as political propaganda, at 344, could equally be applied to the *Fieschi Letter*, 'It was better calculated to deceive because it was set in the context of well-known events and contained nothing which was likely to appear demonstrably false to a Frenchman. In it fact and fiction were so cleverly interwoven...that the whole was credible.'
[160] See especially; Cuttino and Lyman, 'Where is'; Haines, '*Edwardus*'; Mortimer, 'The Death'.

physical journeyings and encounters, rather than through the mental journey of the *Lament*. This letter records Edward II as taking a physical pilgrimage; this journey is an allegory of his inner reformation. Moreover, in the letter the one sin that he has to do penitence for is the murder of the porter; there is no allusion, however veiled, of any failings of him as a monarch

The letter opens by telling the reader that what follows is an account given by Edward II in confession (ex confessione). This statement situates Edward II as having reached a state of grace, having received the sacramental absolution of all his sins. This disclosure predisposes the reader to consider the matter of the letter as having a particular significance; the notion that to present oneself to a priest and accuse oneself of all one's sins, upon which the priest pronounced absolution, rendered the supplicant 'as pure as if Judgement Day were to fall upon the following day' was fundamental to contemporary spiritual understanding.[161]

There is no reference in the *Fieschi Letter* as to the purpose or intent of the communication, either from Edward II or the writer; the narrative starts with an account of the events leading up to the capture and deposition of Edward II. Of the deposition itself, the letter voices Edward as saying that 'he lost the crown at the insistence of many' (perdidit coronam ad requisicionem multorum): a calm retrospective summary that is devoid of anger or blame. Yet prominent in this section of the narrative is the coronation of Edward III: 'Afterwards you were subsequently crowned on the feast of Candlemas next following' (Postea subsequenter fuistis coronatus in proximiori festo Sancte Marie de la Candelor). This the reader seems be invited to understand as one of the misdeeds of which Edward III is accused. Within the framing of this

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[161] 'And he asoyled hym surely and sette hym so clene / As dome3 day schulde haf ben di3t on þe morn.' lines 1183-5, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. and trans. W. R. J. Barron (Manchester, 1998), 132.

document this is usurpation, the same crime that Edward III accused Philip IV of, in the open letter of 1340. He may have been forgiven by his father but the rest of the world is invited to criticise him for it, premised on the ethos of this narrative, which is that Edward II had done nothing to warrant deposition.

The same technique is used in the case of Isabella, Edward II's queen; the choice of words in the letter is curiously reticent, despite implicating her in the attempted murder. Edward II is voiced as saying, of his flight in the face of Isabella's invasion, 'on the admonition of your mother' (propterea monitu matris vestre), a noticeably benign expression for what had by this time become a significant force moving with intent towards London.[162] Isabella's involvement in the murder attempt is only revealed obliquely; the knights who are sent to kill Edward, when they find he has fled, are fearful of the queen's indignation (dubitantes indignacionem regine) - a response that could only be expected from someone who knew of the knights' purpose. Even this inference of responsibility is tempered by the third and final reference to Isabella; the knights who fear her indignation 'maliciously' (maliciose) present the porter's heart to her in place of Edward's own. The use of malicious as the adverb to describe this action suggests that it would have been 'kind' to present Isabella with her husband's heart. This, as the letter is voiced by the husband she was trying to murder, is perplexing. It points either to an emotional connection between husband and wife that endures through attempted murder, or to the supreme forgiveness of a saintly character. In either case the sympathies of the audience are wholly directed towards Edward II and therefore against Isabella. In this letter, the betrayals are of her loyalty to him as king and husband, ultimately expressed in her involvement in the murder plot, treasonous crimes. Yet Edward II does

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[162] See: Fryde, *Tyranny*, 185-92.

not succumb to the deadly sin of anger; rather he demonstrates the 'supreme Christian virtue' of loving his enemy.[163] This insight ties his actions to those of Christ, who died for love of those opposed to him, which gestures towards Edward's elevated spiritual position.[164]

Although Edward II's attitude to Isabella is consistently benign throughout the *Fieschi Letter*, this, the reader is to understand, is the retrospective view of a man who has achieved the pinnacle of spirituality. For at the start of this spiritual journey, on the night he was to be killed, Edward II kills a sleeping porter. This obvious sin is not mitigated through any implication of self-defence; the man is sleeping (*dormientem*), nor does it seem a reluctant act for he is killed without hesitation (*subito*). Although a dead body is crucial to the story, to be substituted for that of Edward II, it has to be conjectured as to why this killing is so openly placed upon Edward II, as opposed to his would-be murderers or the keeper who both plans and accompanies Edward II in the escape. There is no narrative imperative in the story for the porter to be sleeping, or for any adverb to be added to describe how he was killed. This points to an authorial decision to show Edward II on the night of 21 September 1327 to be a man embroiled in sin. This is a vital necessity to the image of Edward II constructed in this document, to vitiate the perception of him as a reformed sinner and penitent. The murder of the porter by Edward II may also be a device that invites its audience to see parallels between this and the death of Edmund, earl of Kent, which this letter constructs as a judicial murder committed by Edward III. For, as the letter says he was beheaded (*decapitatus*) for saying that Edward II was still alive (*quia dixerat eum vivere*), which within the letter was the truth of the matter. Edmund of Woodstock confessed to the belief that his brother still lived and his

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[163] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West* (Oxford, 1985), 36.
[164] Romans 5: 6-10.

involvement in a plot to free him and gave the names of several co-conspirators on 16 March 1330 to a parliament at Winchester.[165] He was sentenced to death and his heirs disinherited, the execution following three days later, on 19 March 1330. Contemporary chronicles record that there was such revulsion at the prospect of beheading a king's son that only after several hours delay could the sentence be carried out, by a fellow convict on the promise of the remission of his own death sentence.[166] This story, whether true or not, serves to underscore the perceived dark magnitude of the deed. It would seem that Edward III acquiesced to the execution; he was present at the parliament in Winchester that heard the case and on the day of the execution wrote, from Winchester, to the bishop of London ordering him to attend a hearing against him arising from information obtained through the trial of Edmund of Woodstock.[167] The Brut, however, in a long and detailed account, alleges that Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer had the earl executed before Edward III had the opportunity to commute the imposed death sentence but given that there were three days between sentencing and execution this story is, at best, unlikely.[168] What the Brut's alternative version seems to indicate is that the execution of Edmund held potential to embarrass the reputation of Edward III. On this basis the reference to the execution of Edmund in the Fieschi Letter can be seen as a riposte to Edward III's claim that Philip IV had 'violated the foundation of kingship by acting against justice'.

[165] For a detailed consideration of the range and spread of this belief see: Kathryn Warner, 'The Adherents of Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent, in March 1330', EHR, 126 (2011), 779-805.
[166] Phillips, Edward II, 566.
[167] G. O. Sayles, The Functions of the Medieval Parliament (London, 1998), 397-8.
[168] Brie, The Brut, i, 267, 'Anone þe Quene Isabel, þrouȝ conseile of þe Mortymer, and wiþout eny oþere conseile, sent in haste to þe baliffys of Wynchestr, þat þai shulde smyte Sir Edmundes heede of Wodestok, Erl of Kent, wiþout eny maner abidyng or respite oppon peyne of lif and lyme ... And when þe Kyng wist þerof, he was wonder sory'.

In November 1330, in the parliament that sentenced Roger Mortimer to death for, among other things, intriguing for the death of Edmund, Edward III annulled his uncle's sentence and reinstated his heirs.[169] Yet he performed no overt penitence for the death, beyond allowing the body to be buried in the church of the Friars Minor.[170] In 1331, Edmund's widow obtained papal permission to have the body exhumed and moved to Westminster Abbey where he was buried in the 'customary place of deceased English royalty'.[171] Therefore, it may be that the actively sought reformation of Edward II, after the murder of the porter, is used to contrast with the un-expiated sin of Edward III, the execution of his uncle. Moreover, Edward III's sin was much graver than that of his father, for he had acquiesced to the death of a person of royal blood and his own blood relative.

The shadowy character of the keeper is used as an indicator of Edward II's spiritual reformation. He is initially introduced as 'the servant who was keeping him' (famulus qui custodiebat), but after giving Edward his own clothes to facilitate the escape, having reached Corfe Castle becomes his companion (socio suo); but who then, on the authority of the castellan of Corfe, continues 'keeping him in the prisons' (qui custodiebat in carceribus). Being kept in the prisons at Corfe, although constructed as a necessity (as the letter states that the Lord of the castle is in ignorance of his presence), can also be read as a metaphor for Edward's spiritual imprisonment for his sin of murdering the sleeping porter. After spending a year and a half there and after learning of the death of his half brother, the earl of Kent, he leaves

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[169] Haines, *Edward II*, 347, item 5 of the inditement, 'Mortimer, knowing that the father of the king was dead and buried, with others deceived the earl of Kent, who desired to know the truth, into thinking he was still alive. And by every way he knew, by means of royal power he apprehended the said earl at the parliament of Winchester and had him put to death.'
[170] Ibid, 460 n.193.
[171] Ibid, 'regalium de functorum Anglie consueverunt corpora sepeleri'.

'with his said keeper' (cum dicto custode suo). It is only after reaching Ireland and 'having taken the habit of a hermit' (recepto habitu unius heremite) that he no longer needs a keeper.

Unpicking this story, details emerge that suggest a deeper meaning to the narrative. The ambiguity of the term 'keeper' allows for a changing perception of this character from jailer to protector and preserver. The castellan of Corfe Castle, the untraceable Lord Thomas, who takes in Edward II but who places him in the prison, is equally intriguing.[172] That he is permitted to leave the prison of Corfe after learning of the beheading of his half brother 'because he said he [Edward II] was alive' (quia dixerat eum vivere) suggests this knowledge had an epiphanic effect upon Edward, spurring on his transformation. Yet his release from Corfe still required the 'consent and counsel' (voluntate et consilio) of Thomas the castellan and the accompaniment of his keeper, inferring that he is still not spiritually fully aware and that both these characters are contributing to, and guiding, his increasing penitential reform.

There are no details given of the Irish sojourn that ensues, but at some point in these nine months, the keeper disappears from the story and Edward takes the garb of a hermit. Initially this is a disguise but its adoption symbolises a new stage in the king's transformation and eventually it becomes the former king's new persona. This completed transformation represents a fuller realisation of Edward's inner sanctity for, as John Howe says of the medieval hermit, '[h]e was venerated because he was connected with and expressed the sacred'.[173]   The mutation of the former king

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[172] Haines, 'Edwardus Redivivus', 71, 'Who was this Thomas? The then constable seems to have been Sir John Deveril, no friend of Edward of Caernarvon'.
[173] John Howe, 'The Awesome Hermit: The Symbolic Significance of the Hermit as a Possible Research Perspective', Numen, 30 (1983), 106-19 at 114.

disguised as a hermit into a *de facto* holy man takes place during his journeyings which can be understood as encompassing a spiritual pilgrimage.

On leaving Ireland, 'fearing lest he be recognized there' (dubitans ne ibi cognosceretur), he returns to England. This seems counter intuitive as the chance of being recognised would be greater in England than Ireland, particularly as he had never visited Ireland.[174] Given that he is shown to be travelling to Avignon to see the pope then the more obvious route would have been by ship to Bordeaux, as used by Irish pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostella.[175] However the evocation of the king traversing his former dominion as a hermit is a powerful one. Edward II leaves England from the port of Sandwich for Sluys (the port of Bruges). Having reached Sluys his journeying then takes him to Normandy. At this point, the reader is told, 'he turned his steps...as many do, going across through Languedoc' (diresit gressus suos...ut in pluribus, transeundo per Linguam Octanem) – which is one of the medieval pilgrimage routes to the shrine of St. James of Compostella.[176] The use of the term 'as many do' reinforces the idea of Edward following pilgrim routes; however, Edward's traverse of Languedoc is not towards Compostella but in the opposite direction leading him to Avignon where, according to the letter, 'pope John' (pape Johanni) was residing. This presumably is a reference to Pope John XXII (1316-1334), pope at the time of Edward II's deposition and death, who had become involved in the controversy over the professed survival of Edward II. A servant presents, on Edward's behalf, 'a document' (unam cedulam) to the pope, no details of which are given, but the pope then 'called to him, and held him secretly and

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[174] J. R. S. Phillips, 'Edward II and Ireland (in fact and fiction)', *Irish Historical Studies*, 33 (2002), 1-18.
[175] For medieval pilgrim routes from Ireland see: Dagmar O Riain-Raedel, 'The Irish Medieval Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella', *History Ireland*, 6 (1998), 17-21, map at 19.
[176] See: J. Stopford, 'Some approaches to the archaeology of Christian pilgrimage', *World Archaeology*, 26 (1994), 57-72 at 58, see: fig.1, for a map of pilgrim routes.

honourably more than fifteen days' (se vocari fecit, et ipsum secrete tenuit honorifice ultra xv dies). The unspecified contents of the document can therefore be presumed to have convinced the pope of Edward's identity, which would explain him being kept honourably, but the reader is not told whose decision it is that he be kept secretly. The rest of the letter would suggest that this was Edward's decision; he left Ireland for fear of being recognised, he has donned the disguise of a hermit and the letter closes by describing him as 'always the recluse' (semper inclusus). This suggests that although it was important for the pope to know who he was, Edward has no desire to be formally recognised. The *Fieschi Letter* then, like the *Lament*, constructs Edward II as having no wish to return to the role of king and instead as recognising the higher calling of serving God.[177]

The discussions that Edward II is said to have had with Pope John are not detailed but 'all things having been considered' (consideratis omnibus) and 'permission having been received' (recepta licencia), Edward departs. This permission received from the pope mirrors that given by Thomas the castellan in that having obtained this, Edward then sets off on a journey, which, explicitly this time, is indicated as a pilgrimage. He retraces his steps to Paris; that he did not visit here when he was in Normandy indicates that it is the pope who is directing this penitential journey. From Paris Edward is then said to travel to Cologne via Brabant, 'so that out of devotion he might

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[177] *Lament*, stanza 13, 'My heart does not repine in regretting earthly honour' (Mon courage pas ne pleint / De terrien honur regreter); stanza 10, 'To serving Him will I turn my mind' (De luy servir mettray m'entente). Therefore, in both the *Lament* and the *Fieschi Letter* Edward II is shaped as conforming to the pre-determinant of Anglo-Saxon royal sanctity, see: Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 235, 'Sanctity was founded upon the renunciation of royal status, upon commitment to the alternative goal of the religious life and upon the adoption in pursuit of that goal of conduct antithetical to that implied by royal birth'.

see The Three Kings' (ut videret iii reges causa devocionis).[178] A visit to this shrine was considered an appropriate penance for major crimes, but a correlation between Edward II and the three kings may also be suggested in that these kings also forsook their kingdoms to follow Christ.[179]

It is after visiting the shrine of the three kings that Edward II's transformation is complete: he is no longer in the guise of a hermit; he has become the hermit. His total sublimation of self to this role is demonstrated in that he only leaves his first hermitage, in the Castle of Melazzo, because 'war overran the said castle' (dicto castro guerra supervenit). It is implied that he has chosen to spend the rest of his days 'doing penance and praying God for you [Edward III] and other sinners' (agendo penitenciam, et Deum pro vobis et aliis peccatoribus orando). The exclusion of Edward II from the sinners in contrast to the inclusion of Edward III indicates the culmination of the letter; Edward II is a saved soul whereas Edward III needs to mend his ways.

The role that Edward II appears to play in this narrative is that of an innocent puppet; he apparently guilelessly recounts and alludes to events that can be constructed as grave misdemeanours by son and wife. Deeds that he can overlook and forgive, yet in this process he exposes these sins to general view, which may invite condemnation. This device succeeds because of the seemingly unimpeachable motives of Edward II, which stems from an appreciation of his character, as represented in the letter, as purged of all sin. Yet the image of Edward II as venerable is very lightly sketched in this document; he commits one sin and does appropriate penance, a very

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[178] Carl Horstman, The Three Kings of Cologne: An Early English Translation of the Historia Trium Regum (London, 1886). The introduction to this book outlines the history of the three kings and the development of the legend.
[179] Edmund Waterton, Pietas Mariana Britannia (London, 1879), 112.

meagre accounting of a laudable reputation. This perhaps suggests that the worthy persona of Edward II does not need to be overtly constructed in this letter. This may be because of the already higher spiritual status of anointed kings – an aspect that both surviving copies of the *Lament* promote – or it may be derived from the narrative itself. The story told in this piece, at its simplest level, is that of a king, who having accepted the loss of his throne does not wish to be recognised because he prefers to be a recluse, dedicating his life to God. The notion that for a king to renounce the world, for the love of Christ, held a recognised association with sanctity.[180]

Discussions of intended audience for this composition are incredibly difficult as it has no known circulation and survives as a single copy. What can be suggested is that given the subtlety of the possible criticism of Edward III this was not intended to persuade people to a view point different from that which they already held. Therefore any appreciation would have been limited to those who supported Philip IV as king and were opposed to Edward III. The use of Latin, the *lingua franca* of clerics, when allied with the survival in the cartulary of the bishop of Maguelone may reveal both its intended audience and at least one appreciative clerk.

Both these sources afford their audiences the opportunity to regard Edward II as having attained sanctity but neither openly refers to this. The *Lament* both shows Edward II as reaching spiritual perfection through his determining to dedicate his life to the worship of God and paralleling his situation to that of Boethius.[181] The *Fieschi Letter* frames him as a king who, without protest, subjected himself to defeat, in the loss of his throne and

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[180] Nelson, 'Royal Saints', 40, 'They qualified for sainthood either through the act of renouncing the world, most spectacular in their case because they had the most to lose, or through self-subjection to defeat and death.'

[181] L.73-4, 'To serving Him I will turn my mind; it grieves me deeply that I did not always do so.'

intimates that he preferred to spend his life in the service of God rather than as a monarch.[182]

These two disparate writings gesture towards the literary, cultural and historical models that could be employed in structuring the former king as a saint.

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[182] 'perditit coronam ad requisicionem multorum' (he lost the crown at the insistence of many); 'semper inclusus' (always the recluse).

Chapter 3

Edward II: from the hour of death to burial

After King Edward II died at Berkeley castle on the 21 September 1327, his body remained there for a full month. In this, the king was denied not only a 'good death' but also the intense spiritual care expected in the first month after death.[1] Such spiritual care, although a basic requirement of the Christian faith, was intensified in the case of the death of an anointed king to become a cultural need, transforming the dead ruler from his human form into a revered immortal ancestor. This chapter will suggest that it was during this month, because of the neglect of the spiritual, legal and physical proprieties, that the seeds were sown for the consolatory and revisionist accounts of the post deposition life of Edward II. Indeed, it can be argued that the less than meticulous care paid to the corpse during this first month necessitated the innovation of an effigy, to stand in place of the corpse, not itself in a fit state for public display. This effigy drew attention to the lack of display of the body. It later came to provide, if not credence, a visible prop from which to hang the subsequent stories of horrific death, or the equally powerful notions of body substitution and the survival of Edward II.

The death itself, in contrast with the deposition of nine months earlier, did not warrant a national announcement. At the deposition, an official view had been promulgated in the form of the king's peace sent to the people via the sheriffs. This carefully crafted announcement, which set both Edward II and his son in a positive construct, simultaneously triggered and directed the

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[1] Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London, 1997), 61, refers to this month as 'a period of intense activity where the focus of the living was on the recently dead'.

reception of the news. Yet on his death there was no similar dissemination of information or guidance on the expected response.[2] Moreover there are suggestions that Roger Mortimer ordered that the news of the death should be withheld until 1 November.[3] Neither were there centrally orchestrated pleas for public mourning, memorialisation or notice of funerary arrangements. The lack of any official edicts meant that the news of the death seeped out, unmediated by any centrally sanctioned statement.[4] This lack of positive direction permitted popular opinion to run unchecked and when, three years after the death of Edward II, the death was pronounced a murder, catalysed into branching pathways of perception concerning the end of the rule and life of Edward II.

Despite the news of the death reaching Edward III and his mother during the night of 23 September 1327, it was not until 21 October that the body was transferred into the protection of Abbot John Thoky of St Peter's Gloucester.[5] A funeral then followed on 20 December 1327, some three months after the death. Yet the length of time between death and burial is not the most

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[2] Although writers have stated that the death was announced 'by messengers to receivers of royal writs around the country' (Mortimer, 'The Death', 1185) or 'The news was clearly made public without delay', (Phillips, *Edward II*, 548) there is no documentary evidence to support the inference that active attempts were made to advise the people of the death of the former king.

[3] John Smyth (1567-1640), *The Berkeley manuscripts. The lives of the Berkeleys; lords of the honour, castle and manor of Berkeley, in the county of Gloucester, from 1066 to 1618*, Vol.1, ed. John Maclean (Gloucester, 1883), 297, 'by a second direction brought back by Gurnay, kept secret the kings death till All Sts. followinge'. Mortimer, 'The Death', 1180, n.29, 'Some shorter French *Brut* manuscripts state that the announcement of the death was not made until All Saints.'

[4] *Foedera*, ii, 2, 718, notes the earliest acknowledgement of the news of the death of Edward II from a letter sent to Edward III by the abbot of Crokesden, from Alton in Staffordshire, only thirty miles from where the court was located. This letter, dated 6 October 1327, requested permission to note the anniversary of the death every 21 September, with an offering of 'quatuor solidatas' (four shillings). It was not until October 23 that the Archbishop of York announced the death to his diocese, see: *Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers*, ed. James Raine (London, 1873), 355-6.

[5] Letters to each were despatched from Berkeley Castle, the receipt of which is evidenced by a letter from Edward III, TNA DL 10/253, dated 24 September, which states that he had heard the news during the previous night.

unusual feature of this event that lies in the span between death and the handing of the body into appropriate spiritual care.[6] In order to pursue this argument the scant details of the circumstances of the corpse of Edward II will be presented and compared to the ritual norms of the contemporary society. A significant problem in this is the status of the corpse; was Edward II a dead king or a dead, disgraced prisoner of the state? His funeral suggested that he was to be regarded as a dead king, yet this display only highlighted the lack of public, familial and spiritual respect paid between the death and funeral.

The death of Edward II undoubtedly fell into the category of an unexpected death and therefore could never be construed as conforming to the medieval idea of a 'good death'. A good death was secured by the administration and acceptance of the three sacraments of confession, communion and extreme unction, contemporaneously known as 'shrift and housel'. The fundamental nature of this view is demonstrated in many contemporary lyrics.[7] Therefore, without any suggestion to the contrary, Edward II could be constructed as dying alone, intestate, without the support of the community, without the protection of extreme unction or the indispensable requirement of confession and penance. This was highly problematic, as the manner of death was deemed to be of high significance for the fate of the soul thereafter. More crucially, when the soul in question was that of a king, its fate could not only

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[6] Edward I died at Burgh on Sands on 7 July 1307 and was buried at Westminster sixteen weeks later. Significantly the king's body was in spiritual care, from the moment of death until its burial. Walter Langton, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, had charge of the body from the point of death until it reached Waltham Abbey when it was transferred into the care of the abbot. See: Alice Beardwood, 'The Trial of Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield, 1307-1312', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, 54 (1964), 1-45 at 11.

[7] See: for example, Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1924), 110, 'So þat ich myn ende daye / Clene of senne deye maye, / Srifte and housele at myn ende, / þat my saule mote wende / yn-to þat blisse of þyn empyre'.

adversely reflect on his bloodline but also impugn the honour of the kingdom.

Therefore, both the reputation of Edward III and that of the kingdom needed to be protected from any suggestion of profanity, which could only be achieved by upholding Edward II as a revered figure. Yet to take this path could raise questions over the validity of the decision to remove him from the throne. Thus, as at the deposition, the ruling powers were caught between symbolising Edward II as a *rex inutilis* or as a noble king of an illustrious, continuing, lineage. In the lack of any evidence to the contrary, it can be conjectured, that it was the slow process of choosing between the opposing options of treating the death of Edward II as that of the death of a king or the death of state prisoner that ultimately resulted in the incoherent memorialisation of Edward II.

Despite the affectionate reverence that Edward III expressed on hearing the news of his father's death, the evidence for a culturally appropriate response, in terms of ordering formal mourning, is exiguous.[8] Phillips excuses Edward III for not taking any immediate action on hearing of the death of his father, because of the pressing matter of a potential invasion by the Scots: 'Resisting the Scots had to take precedence over grieving for the old king, for whom nothing now could be done.'[9] Yet the contemporary view would have been the opposite; an unexpected death (*mors improvisa*), particularly of an anointed king, demanded the most strenuous efforts to mitigate its most awful consequence. As Phillipe Aries describes, 'In this world that was so familiar with death, a sudden death was a vile and ugly death; it was

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[8] TNA DL 10/ 253, 'Trescher cosin novelles vyndront y ce meskerdy le xxiii iour Septembre de deinz la nuyt qe nostre tresher seignur e piere est a dieu comaundez' (dear cousin, news was brought to me, during the night of Wednesday 23rd September that my dear lord and father is entrusted to God).
[9] Phillips, *Edward II*, 549.

frightening; it seemed a strange and monstrous thing that nobody dared talk about'.[10] Paul Binski gives a similar view, 'The bad death by its nature contravened the norms of preparedness and virtue that marked the ideal Christian rite of separation.'[11]

The demands of war had not prevented Edward II, who was in the South when his father died at Burgh on Sands, from both travelling North to pay his respects to his father's body and to accompany the funeral procession for some way.[12] Moreover, the excuse of continuing conflict with the Scots does not bear closer investigation; the court had left York on the 24 August, after disbanding the armed forces, following the disappointing Weardale affray.[13] They remained variously based at Lincoln, Newark and Nottingham from the 31 August until 10 November. At no time in this period did they move against the Scots. Furthermore, Gloucester was only a hundred miles away from where the court was located and this represented only a three-day journey. Yet no court official or family member went to offer his or her respects.

A further excuse that is offered, for the lack of attention to the dead king is that the exchequer was at this time based in York and therefore incapable of making any arrangements with the wardrobe, which was located in London.[14] While this may explain the delay in the funeral it cannot be accepted as the reason for the delay in ensuring appropriate spiritual custody of the body. For Hugh de Glaunville, who was appointed, by patent of 22 October 1327, to oversee the removal of the king's body from Berkeley to Gloucester and make all payments associated with its care thereafter, raised the required

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[10] Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (London, 1981), 11.
[11] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death* (London, 1996), 50.
[12] Beardwood, 'The Trial', 11-12.
[13] Ronald Nicholson, 'The Last Campaign of Robert Bruce', *EHR*, 77 (1962), 233-46 at 241.
[14] Tout, 'The Captivity', 30.

monies locally and they did not come directly from the exchequer.[15] Moreover, considering the sequencing of events, the arrangements for the body to be placed in the protection of St. Peter's Gloucester must have been initiated some time before the actual date of transfer (21 October) whereas the issue of an order for the exchequer to leave York and return south was not given until the 20 October.[16]

Additionally those at Berkeley Castle failed to abide by the statutory practices required upon the discovery of an unexpected death. The procedure that should have been instituted, immediately upon the discovery of the death, was for the 'first finder' to raise a hue and cry. Coroners were obliged to attend the scene as soon as possible and it was the responsibility of the community to guard the body until their arrival.[17] A coroner's inquest would then be held, in the presence of representatives from not just the local community but also those of neighbouring communities, during which the body would be examined in order to determine whether the death was natural or unnatural.[18] The other concern of the coroner was to 'receive presentments of Englishry', which performed as the formal identification of the body.[19] In the case of Edward II, there is no evidence of the coroner being informed and an inquest being held. The actual 'first finder' of the body of Edward II is not identifiable. His official custodian, Thomas de Berkeley, claimed not to be at Berkeley when the death occurred.[20] Yet he sent the

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[15] Moore, 'Documents', 217, 224.

[16] Nicholson, 'The Last Campaign', 246.

[17] R. F. Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge, 1961), 13, 'Speed was essential to enhance the slight chance of capturing any suspects, to ensure the preservation of all financial issues due to the crown and to prevent burial, removal or corruption of the body'.

[18] Ibid, 'In Nottinghamshire in 1330 the interval between death and inquest rarely exceeded three days'; at 14, 'In most cases after 1300 ... from twelve to sixteen men represented the four townships at the inquest.'

[19] Ibid, 20.

[20] Mortimer 'The Death', 1186.

letters informing Edward III and his mother of the death.[21] In this he seems to be adopting the role of 'first finder' by disseminating the news. His attitude towards the legal requirements of a coroner's inquest may be inferred from him having been pardoned by Edward II in 1320 for arresting the four Gloucestershire coroners and 'thereby hindering them in the discharge of the duties of their office.'[22]

The severe penalties imposed for breaches of the procedures for dealing with cases of sudden death point to the core communal concerns in such cases. Thus if someone died suddenly it was expected for it to be determined whether they had died of natural causes or not, as well as having the corpse's identity verified by the community. It could be argued that as coroners acted on behalf of the king and that as the king himself had been informed of this death the need for a coroner's involvement was circumnavigated. Moreover there is no precedent for the coroner's involvement in a royal death but this can be explained by the unlikelihood of a royal death being unattended.[23] Yet it cannot be argued that the need for a coroner's investigation was obviated by Edward II dying while in royal custody, for the coroners 'had to hold inquests into every death in prison'.[24] The implementation of this stricture is supported by Carl Hammer's work on the coroner's rolls of Oxford, which show at least six coroner's investigations

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[21] I. H. Jeayes, Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments in the possession of the Right Honourable Lord Fitzharding at Berkeley Castle (Bristol, 1892), 274, 'de Gourne eunti apud Notyngham pro morte patris Regis, Regi et Regine notificanda cum litteris domini'.

[22] CPR 1317-1321, 451; cited in Hunnisett, Medieval Coroner, 128.

[23] William II, who died in a hunting accident in 1100, was the only other post conquest king to have died very unexpectedly but he did not die alone. However, that he died without the last rites allowed contemporary chroniclers to construct him as eternally damned, see: Michael Evans, The Death of Kings: Royal deaths in Medieval England (London 2003), 37-52.

[24] Hunnisett, Medieval Coroner, 35, 'The coroner had to enquire whether death had been caused by long imprisonment or torture, and if he found that the gaoler or others had hastened death by harsh custody or pain inflicted on the prisoner they had to be arrested as homicides immediately'.

of prisoner deaths in the castle of Oxford between 1342 and 1348.[25] By neglecting to subject the sudden death of Edward II to the customary investigations twin platforms of concern eventuated, which directly mirror the questions that a coroner's inquest sought to satisfy: how did Edward II die and was it his body that was buried at Gloucester, on the 20 December 1327?

Adam Murimuth in his chronicle, the *Continuatio Chronicarum* gives the only account of the body of Edward II being viewed after death.[26] He lists the types of personages who were invited to see the body - abbots, priors, knights and burgesses - and specifies that these personages come from Bristol and Gloucester.[27] He goes on to say that this was before it was eviscerated (corpus suum integrum).[28] Thus, the range of people and the locations from which they are drawn replicates a coroner's inquest but Murimuth adds that they were only able to view the body superficially (tale superficialiter conspexissent), exactly the opposite of what a coroner's enquiry should do.[29] Several aspects of this account raise suspicion as to its credibility. Firstly, for all the persons supposedly invited to see the body, there are no answering witness accounts to corroborate the story. This given that the list included both priors and abbots is remarkable, for they would, in normal circumstances, have taken the news back to their establishments and

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[25] C. Hammer, 'Patterns of Homicide in a Medieval University Town: Fourteenth Century Oxford', *Past and Present*, 78 (1978), 3-23 at 9.

[26] Adam Murimuth was born 1274 or 1275; he was a doctor of civil law and his career that of a clerical diplomat. He started to write his chronicle some time after 1325, while a canon of London, at its fullest extent it covered forty-four years from 1303 to early 1347. See: Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England ii c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), 29.

[27] *Adae Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum Robertus de Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Terti*, ed. E. M. Thompson (London, 1889), 53, 'multi abbates, priores, milites, burgenses de Bristollia et Gloucestria'.

[28] Ibid, 54.

[29] Ibid, Thompson, the editor of the chronicle, notes that one of the extant versions of the chronicle gives 'clam' (secretly, privately, covertly, in secret) instead of 'tale' (such, of such a kind) as the adjective to describe the viewing.

ordered prayers for the deceased and, like the abbot of Crokesden, requested permission to observe the anniversary of the death. Secondly, none of the invitees is named nor is there any suggestion of who supposedly issued the invitations. Thirdly, the author gives no location for where this supposed viewing of the body took place. Finally, if the body was only viewed superficially, then how does the author know this was before evisceration? Therefore, it can be contended that this account is a set piece, an empty scene, mirroring a coroner's inquest but designed to explain how this death was accepted as a natural death, at the time, only to be revealed as a murder three years later. The account, read in this light, draws attention to the cunning and duplicity of the murderers, who Murimuth says were commonly being named as John Maltravers (Berkeley's brother in law), and Thomas Gurney (the Berkeley retainer who had delivered the letters announcing the death to Edward III and Queen Isabella).[30] Moreover, Murimuth's account was written at least twenty years after the events it describes, albeit from contemporary notes and with the advantage of Murimuth having possibly been located at Exeter at the time of the death.[31] Yet Murimuth's chronicle was also composed after the execution of Roger Mortimer, primarily, according to Murimuth, for determining that Edward II should be suffocated.[32] Therefore, it can be argued, that, in this instance, the chronicler was primarily concerned with finding a plausible explanation, within the contemporarily expected rituals, as to how the murder had escaped detection. Consequently, the author, who could not imagine that the

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[30] Ibid, 'dictum tamen fuit vulgariter quod per ordinationem dominorum J[ohannis] Mautravers et T[homae] de Gorneye'. Thomas Gurney was convicted of the murder and sentenced to death, in his absence, in 1330. John Maltravers, was sentenced to death, not for the murder of Edward II but for plotting against the earl of Kent, see: Phillips, *Edward II*, 572-5.

[31] See: Mortimer, 'The Death', 1178, n.16.

[32] *Murimuth*, 63, 'Prima, quia dicebatur quod ipse fuit consentiens quod pater regis in castro de Berkeleye fuerat suffocatus' (First, it was said that the same consented that the king's father was suffocated in the castle of Berkeley).

body of a king had not been presented to the community, pictures the appropriate scene and then inserts the subversive, explanatory component; the body could not be clearly seen. This hypothetical episode therefore upholds the honour of the community; they would have uncovered the murder, were it not for the deliberate machinations of the murderers in only allowing a superficial view of the corpse.

Having discussed the legal norms of a case of sudden death then the equally significant spiritual needs must also be considered. In such cases the priest was as least as significant as the coroner. For the belief was that 'the soul was still regarded as lingering in the vicinity of the body during the first thirty days'.[33] Katherine Park elaborates on this, finding that during this period the corpse was treated as 'active, sensitive, or semi animate, possessed of a gradually fading self'.[34] This view was enshrined in the 'common' performance of the ceremony of the 'month's mind'.[35] Moreover as this body had not benefitted from the essential last rites, which were considered much more important than the funeral ceremony, then it was also at great risk of falling prey to devils.[36] These dangers could only be countered by the body lying in a sanctified space, being constantly watched and prayed over. Yet belief in the lingering capacities of a recently dead body may also help to explain the total sequestering of Edward II's body for the first month. For it was also believed that the murdered body could bear witness against its murderers, by bleeding.[37] Such manifestations were recognised in law, as proof of murder, until at least 1688.[38]

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[33] Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 62.
[34] Katherine Park, 'The Life of the Corpse: Division and Dissection in Late Medieval England', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 50 (1995), 111-32 at 115.
[35] Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 49, 62.
[36] Ibid, 36.
[37] W. R. Riddell, 'At the Murderer's Touch', *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 18 (1927–8), 175-9.
[38] Ibid, 175.

Very little of the immediate treatment of the corpse can be adduced from the records. Hugh de Glaunville's account does allow for the possibility of costs incurred in the conservation of the corpse (expensas factas...pro conservatione dicti corporis).[39] Yet as his involvement does not commence until 21 October these cannot relate to any immediate post death treatment.[40] Ian Mortimer finds in a receiver's account of Berkeley Castle terminating on the 28 September 1327, payment for one hundred pounds of wax, two palls, other cloths, red dyes, and spices including galingale and saffron.[41] This he assumes is for the embalming of Edward II. Notwithstanding this the amount of wax and cloth bears little resemblance to the amounts ordered firstly against the possible death of Edward I in 1306, when 'four carts [were required] to carry 2310lb of wax and dried spices' or actually on his death in 1307 when £200 was spent on 'wax and cloth of gold', which required six carts for transportation.[42] Mortimer himself notes the lack of mention of balsams and other oils, such as were purchased 'to prevent decay' in the mortuary rites of Edward III, but allows the possibility that these are accounted for elsewhere.[43] Yet there is an alternative argument that can be presented from this evidence and that is that the treatment of the corpse, while in the charge of Berkeley castle, was inadequate and amateur.

Immediate evisceration and embalming had been the norm for any royal corpse that was not to be buried immediately.[44] Yet in 1299, a papal bull,

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[39] Moore, 'Documents', 224.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1183.
[42] J. R. H. Moorman, 'Edward I at Lanercost Priory 1306-7', *EHR*, 67 (1952), 161-74 at 166; Beardwood, 'The Trial', 11.
[43] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1183, n.47.
[44] E. M. Hallam, 'Royal Burial and the Cult of Kingship in France and England 1060-1330', *Journal of Medieval History*, 8 (1982), 359-80 at 364, '[t]o be effective, evisceration had to

Detestande feritatis, had been issued which forbade this practice, describing the ritual as 'abominable in the sight of God'.[45] The strictures of this decree denied Christian burial to any body subjected to evisceration or division and pronounced *ipso facto* excommunication on any person 'of whatever rank or status' that was complicit in such an act.[46] This bull was then included in the canonical collection, *Extravagantes communes*, to become a part of the church legislation governing funeral rites.[47] As a result, Elizabeth Brown alleges that, '[i]n England the number of separate burials of the body parts declined radically during the fifty years following the bull's issuance.'[48] Despite the papal prohibition, the suggestion that the corpse of Edward II was eviscerated comes from two independent sources; the first is the Berkeley Castle accounts, which reveal the cost of a silver vase for the heart.[49] The heart was then presented to Edward's widowed queen and subsequently, in 1358, buried with her.[50] It is highly improbable that those at the castle of Berkeley would incur such an expense (37s 8d) and present the heart to the queen, his widow, without instruction. Therefore, it has to be presumed that the impulse for this action originated from the court at Lincoln, as a response to hearing of the death. Mortimer, without referring to the papal bull, suggests that the heart 'was simply removed as a matter of ritual', citing several other royal incidences of this sort of occurrence.[51] Yet the incidents that he uses to illustrate his argument do not match the particular circumstances of this heart memorialisation. For all the heart removals to which he refers precede the papal bull. Furthermore the hearts

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be performed in good time: that was the lesson learned from Henry I's decomposition [in 1135]'.

[45] E. A. R. Brown, 'Death and the human body in the Late Middle Ages: the legislation of Boniface VIII on the division of the corpse', *Viator*, 12 (1981), 221-70 at 221.

[46] Ibid, 221-2.

[47] Ibid, 221.

[48] Ibid, 253.

[49] Smyth, *Berkeley manuscripts*, i, 293, 'for a silver vessel to put the kings hart in 37s 08d'.

[50] Phillips, *Edward II*, 552.

[51] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1208.

were then presented for veneration to a religious establishment and not retained by a family member. Moreover, in the cited cases, the heart removal is accompanied by an equal veneration of the royal entrails. For example, the viscera of Eleanor, wife of Edward I and mother of Edward II, was entombed at Lincoln cathedral, her heart was given to the Dominican priory of Blackfriars and her body interred at Westminster abbey. That there is no reference at all to the entrails of Edward II suggests that those in control at Berkeley, although abiding by specific instructions, were not attempting to replicate the full historic ritual associated with royal deaths. An extension of this line of argument is to question whether a full evisceration was carried out. The possibility has to be allowed that only the chest was opened to retrieve the heart, as this had been requested, but that no further removal of body organs was undertaken. If this was the situation then the result would have been rapid and irreversible putrefaction of the body as it is the digestive tract that most forcibly drives the process of decay.

The second piece of evidence on the matter could suggest a lack of respect being shown to the body of the former king. This is in that, according to de Glaunville's accounts, it was an unidentified woman who performed the evisceration (mulierem que exviceravit Regem).[52] This clearly does not speak of the powerful ceremonial ritual usually invoked by the death of a king. Should this woman have been called from a nunnery she would surely have been identified as such, rather than by the less than specific 'quandam mulierem'? Furthermore, there were no houses of nuns in the immediate vicinity of Berkeley castle, the closest religious house being the Cistercian monastery of Kingswood. If she were not a nun, it is difficult to conceive of a woman who would have been suitably skilled in the art of evisceration. Even

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[52] Moore, 'Documents', 226.

nuns are rarely recorded as performing evisceration. There is at least one contemporaneously recorded instance of an Italian nun, who in 1308 eviscerated the body of one of her own community, in order to investigate her suspected saintliness. Yet, even in this account, the unusualness of the situation is given additional emphasis by the reference to her performing this action 'with her own hands'.[53] That evisceration was regarded as a sacred ritual is also illustrated in this account. The nuns, having found several indicators of sanctity within the heart of the corpse, ask the secular physician of the monastery to open the gall bladder. This he refuses to do, 'as he said, he did not feel himself worthy.'[54]

The more usual procedure for English royal deaths can be seen in the account of King John's mortuary rites of 1216. These were performed by his confessor, the abbot of Crokestone, at Newark Castle, where he had died. Then, according to the chronicle account, the entrails and heart were despatched to the monastery of Crokestone, with the body being, at King John's request, buried at Worcester.[55] Returning to the death of Queen Eleanor, she died in a private house in Harby on November 28 1290, in the presence of both a local priest and the bishop of Lincoln. Despite this her body was then taken to the Gilbertine priory of St. Catherine's in Lincoln, nearby to where she had died, to be embalmed and eviscerated.[56] The normal practices that can be elucidated from these examples are that evisceration, as opposed to simple embalming, is a specialised skill and only

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[53] Katherine Park, 'The Criminal and Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47 (1994), 1-33 at 1, Sr. Francesca of Foligno, 'cut it open from the back with her own hands, as they had decided. And they took out the entrails and put the heart away in a box, and they buried the entrails in the oratory that evening.'
[54] Ibid, 2.
[55] *Radulphi de Coggeshall, Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1875), 183-4.
[56] David Crook, 'The Last Days of Eleanor of Castile: The death of a Queen in Nottinghamshire, November 1290', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 94 (1990), 17-28.

undertaken at the place of death if there is a person within the household capable of and spiritually qualified to perform this sacred task. Moreover, this person was historically, in the royal context, a male in holy orders.[57]

Thus the overarching issue in this is not would a woman have had the suitable skills and training but why choose a woman rather than a man? For this, the most plausible explanation, other than the body of the former king being treated in a deliberately degrading manner, lies in the papal prohibition on bodily division. Queen Isabella had herself been mindful enough of the bull to, in 1323, obtain a papal indult to permit a post mortem, tripartite division of her body (heart, entrails and body) and had this confirmed in 1345.[58] Yet, on her death she was buried intact, in her wedding mantle.[59] The alabaster effigy that she herself commissioned for her tomb showed the placement of her husband's heart at her breast.[60] This can be postulated as confirming that it was her own wish to have her husband's heart in her possession.[61] This desire may have been in emulation of her French patrimonial tradition of monarchs and consorts being buried with at least one part of their spouse.[62] Notwithstanding this the heart was also regarded as

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[57] Even Guy de Chauliac (d.1368), the author of the *Chirurgia Magna* (in which he claimed that embalming could preserve the face from decay for eight days), although he referred to himself as a 'Physicus', had taken minor orders before embarking upon a career in medicine, see: George. H. Murphy, 'Guy De Chauliac', *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 65 (1951), 68-71 at 69.

[58] Brown, 'Death and the human body', 253.

[59] F. D. Brackley, 'Isabella of France, Queen of England 1308-1358 and the Late Medieval Cult of the Dead', *Canadian Journal of History*, 15 (1980), 23-47 at 26.

[60] Ibid, 29, 'for the making of the tomb of the queen by a certain agreement made with me by the council of the queen in her lifetime.'

[61] The tomb no longer survives but Brackley [ibid, 30] infers that Edward II's heart was incorporated into effigy, 'in the breast of which was placed the heart of Edward II.'

[62] Brown, 'Death and the human body', 258-9, Queen Jeanne of France (Isabella's sister in law), in her will of 1319 stipulated 'that her heart should lie at Saint-Denis at her husband's feet if he predeceased her and that he should determine its resting place if he survived her'.

the primary organ that would, as the 'seat of the vital *spiritus*', at the resurrection, vitalise the soul.[63]

The knowledge that it was a woman who eviscerated the former king comes not from a record of payment to the woman (indeed, there is no mention of recompense for her), but for taking her to Worcester, after the funeral, on the orders of the king, to the queen (ad Reginam precepto Regis).[64] Furthermore, as Stuart Moore comments, Glaunville appears to divulge this information reluctantly, having omitted these details from the roll of particulars previously delivered by him into the Exchequer.[65] The purpose of the meeting of the queen with this woman has produced some speculation from writers on the death of Edward II. Moore himself subscribes to the idea that Edward III sent the woman to Queen Isabella to disabuse her of the rumours of the 'barbarous' murder of Edward II.[66] Tout also shapes this incident as an early attempt to investigate the circumstances of the death.[67] Haines assumes that the order to bring the woman to the queen, 'is Isabella's mandate in official guise' and the explanation for this act was simply 'she desired to know how her husband had died.'[68] Phillips notes the incident but does not speculate upon it.[69] Most dramatic is Mortimer's interpretation of this event, which he shapes as a pivotal moment in his theory of the survival of Edward II. This he hypothesises as, 'the purpose of bringing this woman to the royal presence was precisely so that the queen had an independent witness to convince the young king that his father had

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[63] Nancy Caciola, 'Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval culture', Past & Present, 152 (1996), 3-45 at 9.
[64] Moore, 'Documents', 226.
[65] Ibid, 218, 'it would look as though the suppression was intentional.'
[66] Ibid, 218.
[67] Tout, The Captivity, 31.
[68] Haines, Edward II, 230.
[69] Phillips, Edward II, 552.

not been buried in Gloucester'.[70] If the heart removal represented Isabella's particular but anti-canonical request then a simpler explanation presents itself. It may be that this woman having been specifically sent by Isabella for this secret purpose was then being conveniently returned. This would then also explain why there is no official payment made for her services in this matter, for if she were in the Queen's service then any payment would have been made directly by the Queen. The woman, whoever she was, disappears from the records after having been taken to the Queen, which also supports the idea that this was a private matter and the identity of this person deliberately concealed, perhaps for her own protection.

It is not known where the body of Edward II lay for the month it was retained at Berkeley Castle. It is possible that it lay in the chapel of St. John, in a bastion of the keep, which Haines surmises was kept for the king's own use.[71] Smyth states that oblations and masses were made in the castle chapel, dedicated to St. Mary, next to the great hall, for the repose of the soul, and that these were charged to the exchequer.[72] These 'severall' oblations totalled a mere 21d (1s 9d), a derisory amount when compared to a single oblation offering made by Edward I in 1306 of 17s 3d and at a requiem, in the same year, of 10s 9d.[73] Moreover, it reveals a significant diversion from the accepted norms, which dictated that 'a high level of Masses should be said soon after the death, which then tailed off.'[74] The only person recorded as being attendant upon the body during this time was a royal sergeant-at-arms, William Beaukaire, who seems to have been present

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[70] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1189.
[71] Haines, Edward II, 226.
[72] Smyth, The Berkeley manuscripts, i, 293, 'In oblations at severall times in the chapple of the castle of Berkeley for the kings soule 21d'.
[73] Moorman, 'Lanercost Priory', 170.
[74] Daniell, Death and Burial, 61.

at the castle at the time of the death.[75] Significantly there is no record of priests being with the body during this crucial time. This abject deficiency is thrown into relief by the amount of spiritual attention that was deemed appropriate once the body was transferred to the care of St. Peter's, Gloucester. The accounts for this period show that the Bishop of Landaff (Johanni Landavenis) and three of the king's chaplains (Bernardi Bergh de Kyrkeby, Bernardo de Bergh and Ricardo de Potesgrave) are charged with praying over the king's body for the fifty-nine days between it being given into the care of St. Peter's, Gloucester and its burial.[76] The lack of regard for the spiritual care of the body while in the custody of Berkeley castle, would have been remarkable in any case, but in the case of a former king verged on desecration.

When and by whom the decision was made to place the body into religious care prior to burial is not known. Westminster Abbey sent two monks to the court at Nottingham during October in an unsuccessful mission 'to seek the body of the dead king (pro corpore Regis defuncti petendo)'.[77] Whether they did not succeed because the decision had already been made to bury Edward II at Gloucester or if their arrival provoked the decision making process is not clear. Several writers accept that the decision not to bury the king in London was a political decision, even if they disagree as to the reasons behind the decision.[78] The fifteenth century *Historia* of the abbey of Gloucester alleges

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[75] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1181.

[76] Moore, 'Documents', 224-5.

[77] Phillips, *Edward II*, 551.

[78] Haines, *Edward II*, 228, 'those holding the reins of government were anxious to give him an honourable burial but in a place of their choosing, remote from London ... Isabella and her paramour were unwilling to risk the sympathy that might have been aroused'. Phillips, *Edward II*, 9, '[i]t is also likely that the hostility that had grown up between Westminster Abbey and the crown during the reign of Edward II was one reason why Edward III refused the monks' request that he should be buried there. Mortimer, 'The Death', 1204-05, 'The survival of Edward II in custody would explain ... why Westminster Abbey was refused the honour of receiving the supposed ex-king's body in 1327.'

that they had accepted the body when the houses of St. Augustine's, Bristol, Kingswood and Malmesbury had all declined to do so for fear of the wrath of Mortimer and Isabella.[79] The implication of this statement, which is that the acceptance of the body of a former king could prove to be a political embarrassment, does not concur with either the generalised cult of the dead or the ambitions in regard to the veneration of dead royals, espoused by the Benedictine order in particular. Therefore, the idea that St. Peter's Gloucester was not the primary choice of burial site has been dismissed by all recent writers from Tout to Phillips.[80] Yet it bears re-examination in this line of argument, which is that the burial of the former king was a political issue for both the crown and the receiving institution. Moreover, a less than straightforward negotiation of a suitable resting place for the dead king would explain the delay in handing the body over to spiritual care.

The three houses mentioned in the *Historia* are not grouped geographically or by monastic order. However, they all had reasons to either bow before the will of Roger Mortimer or were under the patronage of Berkeley. St. Augustine's, Bristol had been founded by Robert Fitzharding, an ancestor of Thomas de Berkeley, Edward's gaoler and Mortimer's agent, and the Berkeley family remained 'generous patrons' of the institution, building their own chapel there.[81] Moreover, St. Augustine's was regarded, at this time, as

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[79] *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ed., W. H. Hart, 3 vols. (London, 1863-7), i, 44, 'Nam post mortem ejus venerabile ejus corpus quaedam vicina monasteria, videlicit Sancti Augustini Bristolliae, Sancta Mariae de Kyngeswode, Sancti Aldemi de Malmesbury, ob terrorem Rogeri de Mortuomari et Isabellae reginae, aliorumque complicum, accipere timuerunt.' (Then, after his death certain nearby monasteries, St Augustine's Bristol, St Marys Kingswood, St Aldhelm's Malmesbury, were afraid to accept his venerable corpse because of their terror of Roger Mortimer and Isabella the queen and other henchmen.)

[80] Tout, 'Captivity', 28, 'There was certainly no "fear of the queen and Mortimer" to deter the neighbouring abbey from accepting the charge of the king's body', Phillips, *Edward II*, 551, 'The claim in the history of St. Peter's, Gloucester ... is patently untrue.'

[81] William Page, ed., 'The abbey of St Augustine, Bristol' in *VCH: A History of the County of Gloucester*, 2 (1907), 75-9, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40273>

the family mausoleum.[82] Kingswood, a Cistercian monastery, lay in closest proximity to Berkeley castle and it too had been founded by the Berkeley family with the gift of a manor in 1139.[83] That they continued as benefactors is indicated by their financial support of the monastery in the aftermath of the Black Death of 1348.[84] Therefore, it can be seen that both these establishments would have been very sensitive to the views of the Berkeley family and if the family did not wish the king's body to be buried there would have respected those wishes. Malmesbury Abbey, a Benedictine house, appears to have had different reasons for not wishing to provoke Roger Mortimer. Two of their abbots, Adam de Hoke and his successor John of Tintern, 'were deeply implicated in the civil wars of Edward II's reign. It appears that Tintern was the ringleader and he did not extricate himself from his troubles until 1347.'[85] Furthermore, evidence from encaustic tiles, bearing the Despenser arms, found on the site of the church suggests a connection with this family.[86] Therefore, it is possible to see that there may well have been elements of truth in the claim that Gloucester, being independent of the potential displeasure of Roger Mortimer or his allies, could claim the body without fear of repercussions. Thus the claim made in the *Historia* may both explain the delay in consigning the body into spiritual custody and reveal the competing factionalism at the centre of the regnal administration, concerning the post-mortem arrangements. For, assuming the *Historia* is accurate in saying three houses had refused the body, then

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accessed 16 October 2012, 'the monastery was liberally endowed, and successive lords of Berkeley showed themselves generous patrons of the foundation of their ancestor, Robert Fitzharding.'

[82] See: I. M. Roper, 'Effigies of Bristol', *Trans. B&G*, 26 (1903), 215-87.

[83] William Page, ed., 'The abbey of Kingswood', in *VCH: Gloucester*, ii, 99-101, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40281> accessed 16 October 2012.

[84] Ibid, 99, 'the generosity of the Berkeley's again stood the convent in good stead'.

[85] R. Pugh and E. Crittall, eds., 'The Abbey of Malmesbury' in *VCH: A History of the County of Wiltshire*, 3 (1956), 210-31, <http//www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=36532> accessed 16 October 2012.

[86] Ibid. n.311.

this implies that three houses had been approached. If they had all then rejected the request for fear of Mortimer and the Queen then it has to be presumed that it was not they who issued the request. This suggests that one of the centralized branches of administration was working independently on the funerary process and that Roger Mortimer, through Thomas Berkeley, was working against the decisions of the council, of which he was not a member.[87]

Details of the circumstances of the body between the 21 October and the 20 December are equally slight. The journey from Berkeley Castle to Gloucester is commemorated in popular tradition by an overnight stop at Standish, which is highly plausible as the 'Ecclesia de Stanedisshe' is listed as a church belonging to St. Peter's in the *Historia* and lies just a little off the Roman road, just over half way between Berkeley and Gloucester.[88] The associated tradition of oaks being planted along the route from the Roman road to Standish, to commemorate the passage of the dead king, cannot be evidenced.[89] Yet, this folkloric memory preserves the suggestion that the funeral route of this king should be marked and remembered.

The road from Berkeley to Gloucester would suggest that the cortege would enter the city through the south gate. Most writers who mention the corpse during this two month period assume that it was taken directly to the abbey church of St. Peter.[90] This view is probably predicated upon the account

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[87] Haines, *Edward II*, 195-6.
[88] *Historia*, iii, 31-2.
[89] 'Proceedings at the Annual Spring Meeting, At Standish, Moreton Valence, Frampton and Leonard Stanley', *Trans. B&G*, 32 (1909), 1-21 at 9.
[90] For example, Mortimer, 'The Death', 1181, 'The facts are that it was watched day and night by a number of men from 20 October, was carried on Abbot Thoky's carriage to Gloucester in procession, and then laid in state on a great hearse in the abbey for two months.'

given in the *Historia*.[91] In the *Historia,* a single sentence encompasses not only the transportation of the body from Berkeley to Gloucester but also the subsequent eight weeks and the funeral.

> Iste tamen abbas suo curru honorifice ornato cum
> armis ejusdem ecclesiae depictis, eum a castello de
> Berkeley adduxit, et ad monasterium Gloucestriae est
> delatus, abbate cum toto conventu solenniter
> revestitis, cum processione totius civitatis est
> honorifice susceptus, et in ecclesia ibidem in parte
> boreali juxta magnum altare traditur tumulandus.[92]

This compressed account does not intend to convey the detail of these eight weeks; it only seeks to record the significance of the abbey of St. Peter's to the narrative. Thus, it conflates the carriage of the body from Berkeley to Gloucester with the funeral procession and the burial, as if they all occurred on the same day. Furthermore, had the body been taken immediately to the abbey church the arrangements, then in hand but not completed, for a funeral procession including a very ornate hearse, 'made between 24th November and 11th December' would make very little sense, if the body was already in the place of burial.[93] Therefore it can be postulated that the body, although given into the care of the abbot, lay not in the abbey church but in one of the two city churches belonging to St Peter's; St John the Baptist and St Michael's. Of these St. Michael's, in the centre of the city, on the corner of

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91 *Historia*, i, 44-5.
92 The abbot brought him from the castle of Berkeley, on a chariot, honourably decorated and painted with the arms of the abbey, to the monastery of Gloucester, the abbot and all the community, solemnly vested, in procession with all the city, was honourably taken up, and in the church there was buried in the northern part next to the high altar.
93 Moore, 'Documents', 221-2. The hearse was decorated with, 'four great lions made by the hands of John de Eastwick, painter, of the best gilt, with mantles upon them of the arms of the king of England ... four images of the Evangelists standing upon [it] ... eight angels censing with gold censers, and two great lions rampant'.

Eastgate and Southgate streets is the more probable as the church of John the Baptist lay at the North gate.[94]

The royal wardrobe supplied the items required for the funeral, as these were sent directly to Gloucester; it can be assumed that these arrangements were only initiated after the agreement was made to bury the king at Gloucester.[95] Moreover, the appointment of Sir John Darcy, who was charged to 'provide and supervise the things necessary for the obsequies' did not commence until 22 November.[96] This suggests that it was only after the custody of the body had passed to Hugh de Glaunville, the agent of the crown, that the specific challenges of this funeral were appreciated. The reason for re-examining this matter is that it would seem that the body of Edward II was encased in lead before being interred.[97] Further, there are reasons for thinking that this happened at Berkeley before the body was given to the care of St. Peter's Gloucester. Firstly, forensic studies indicate that the body, by this time, would have passed significantly along the decomposition process, with the 'typical onset' of abdominal rupture occurring on day nine.[98] A second and compelling argument is that sealing

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[94] See: Nigel Baker and Richard Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church* (Aldershot, 2004), map at 103; St John the Baptist at 101; St Michael's at 109.

[95] Joel Burden, 'Re-writing a Rite of Passage: The Peculiar Funeral of Edward II' in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, eds. N. F. McDonald and W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 2004), 13-29 at 17.

[96] Moore, 'Documents', 221, records that Sir John Darcy was paid a daily rate of 13s 4d per day from 22 November to 21 December 1327.

[97] This is based on the brief opening of the tomb in 1855. See: David Welander, *The History, Art and Architecture of Gloucester Cathedral* (Stroud, 1991), 150, 'the tomb of Edward II in the cathedral was opened, removing the floor on the south side of the tomb: only just below the flooring, immediately under the tomb. We came first to a wooden coffin, quite sound, and after removing a portion of this, we came to a leaden one...quite entire, and made with a very thick sheet of lead, its shape very peculiar, being square at the bottom, and rising on each side like an arch, and so turned over the body in an oval or arched form, and made to set nearly down upon the body.'

[98] C. L. Parks, 'A Study of the Human Decomposition Sequence in Central Texas', *Journal of Forensic Studies*, 56 (2011), 19-22 at 20, a table, 'Stages and events of decomposition', lists the physical signs of decomposition, the times of 'typical onset' and the range. Abdominal

the body in lead would have effectively concealed any physical evidence of murder and evisceration as well as circumnavigated the problems of a decaying corpse, whether fully or partially eviscerated. For as Ralph Giesey notes, from a mid sixteenth century treatise by a surgeon to the kings of France, despite the most strenuous and sophisticated efforts, corpses decayed so fast that after five or six days they had to be enclosed in lead.[99] From the very partial sighting of Edward II's lead coffin it can be deduced that his was formed in the most basic manner and that it was not of a sophisticated design intended for viewing.[100] This would support the contention that the lead covering was not the work of a specialist and not effected to signify the elevated status of the corpse.[101] This concords with the underlying argument that the treatment of the corpse while in the care of Berkeley castle was mundane and that it was only once it came into the custody of St. Peter's, Gloucester and effectively under the control of the state that its significance was recognised. Moreover, this would fully explain the need for an effigy.

Notwithstanding this, Joel Burden points out that some of the articles supplied by the royal wardrobe for the funeral were not returned and he

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rupture is typically preceded by; bloat, marbling, bulla formation, rectal purge, skin slippage, facial purge and darkening.

[99] Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva, 1960), 27, 'Why is it that at present our kings, princes and great nobles, even though they are disembowelled and washed in brandy and vinegar and sprinkled with aromatics, sparing nothing to embalm them, despite all this in five or six days at least smell so badly that one cannot stand to remain where they are, but it is necessary to put them in lead coffins.'

[100] The coffin described in 1855 appears to have been formed from a simple sheet of lead, folded over the body whereas decorated 'coffins, shaped to fit the corpse and soldered round the edge' were made for intended display, see: *English medieval industries: craftsmen, techniques, products*, eds. J. Blair and N. Ramsay (London, 1991), 65 and fig. 18.

[101] For an example of a high status, deaths, using a lead coffin, see: Brackley, 'Isabella', 26, he reports that on the death of Queen Isabella, '[l]ead was purchased for an inner casket and a lead worker brought from London to make it. An outer wooden coffin bound in iron was constructed.'

therefore presumes them to have been buried on the corpse.[102] These items comprised of a 'linen coif, shirt, tunic and gloves worn by the king on the day of his coronation'.[103] Further supplied, and returned, were 'a mantle, tunic, dalmatic and girdle, pair of buskins, sandals and spurs, a cap of estate, a crown of silver-gilt, a sceptre and a rod, two silver-gilt fleurons and a silver-gilt ring'.[104] These Burden assumed dressed the effigy. Thus, in Burden's construction, the corpse itself was dressed only in a coif, shirt, tunic and gloves. Yet the practical difficulty of dressing a corpse in gloves after some weeks of decay and possibly further complicated by the individual digits having been wrapped in linen renders this suggestion improbable. Moreover, why would a corpse be dressed in gloves when the legs and feet remain bare? The opening of King John's tomb in 1797 affords an exemplar of the clothing of a royal corpse. In this case, although the marble effigy shows the king wearing gloves the revealed corpse had no gloves, yet the remains of the buskins were present.[105] Furthermore gloves would do much to conceal the deficiencies of a wooden effigy, particularly if the effigy was to be adorned with rings. Burden's construction pictures neither the corpse or the effigy as fully clothed, the only duplication of attire being a tunic. Yet, re-interpreting the same evidence from the position that Edward II's body was sealed in lead, prior to the arrival of the clothing from the royal wardrobe, a more plausible picture of the funerary arrangements can be derived. That two hearses were provided for this funeral, (one was hired from 'Andrew, *candelarius*' of London and the other specially made) promotes the idea that the coffin was carried in one and the effigy in another.[106] The possibility is that one hearse conveyed the coffin (covered with the specially made cloth,

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[102] Burden, 'Rite of Passage', 17.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] W. St. John Hope, 'On the funeral effigies of the kings and queens of England', *Archaeologia*, 60 (1907), 517-50 at 525-6.
[106] Moore, 'Documents', 222.

decorated with a gilded leopard), surmounted by the silver gilt crown and cap of estate, sent by the royal wardrobe and subsequently returned.[107] The other hearse may have carried the effigy, fully dressed in all the garments supplied by the wardrobe for the ceremony of burial, including the copper gilt crown specially made for it at a cost of '7s. 3d.' and bearing the sceptre and rod. [108] As neither the effigy nor the magnificent (and presumably costly) hearse were returned to the great wardrobe, the presumption is that they were re-utilised as the initial funerary monument. In which case, following the funeral, the effigy would have been stripped of the most significant and valuable items, which were then returned to the wardrobe. Any deficiencies in the garb of the effigy could then have been concealed beneath the magnificent cover that had been specially made for the funeral, which probably lay over the coffin during the funeral procession. The post funeral display may have had the effigy directly placed on the simple Purbeck plinth that initially constituted the tomb or, more likely, it was replaced onto the elaborate hearse, which then stood over the tomb slab.[109]

Turning to consider the effigy in more detail, W. St. John Hope has questioned whether this effigy was an innovation.[110] The evidence he brings to bear on this subject, from the burial of Henry III, has been challenged by more recent writers and it is now generally accepted that the funeral of Edward II was the first to use such a symbol.[111] Philip Lindley argues that the use of an effigy in this situation was a political metaphor, introduced to

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[107] Mortimer, 'The Death', 1181, 'Eight hundred gold leaves were purchased for gilding a leopard onto the cover placed over the body.'

[108] Burden, 'Rite of Passage', 17, n.15, 'Item in una corona de cupro pro eadem ymagine empta cum factura et deauracine eiusdem, vii s. viii d.'

[109] Carolyn Heighway and Richard Bryant, The Tomb of Edward II (Past Historic, Gloucestershire, 2007), 2.

[110] St. John Hope, 'funeral effigies', 527.

[111] P. Lindley, 'Ritual, Regicide and Representation: the Murder of Edward II and the Origin of the Royal Funeral Effigy in England', Gothic to Renaissance: Essays on Sculpture In England, (Stamford, 1995), 97-112.

differentiate between the funerals of a king *regnant* and that of a deposed king.[112] This notion is undermined by an effigy being produced for the subsequent funeral of a *regnant* king, that of Edward II's son, Edward III, in 1377.[113] Burden promotes the view that the effigy was created to convince the populace of the death of Edward II.[114] Implicit in this argument is the misplaced idea that there was scepticism about the death of Edward II prior to the funeral, whereas the evidence points more to the 'peculiar funeral' of Edward II giving credence to later doubts about his death.[115]

The simplest and most likely explanation for the use of an effigy in this context is necessity. Rather than this being part of a sophisticated and knowing artifice this was the solution to an unforeseen problem, a problem that had arisen because the dead king had not immediately been subjected to the exacting mortuary rites necessary for a long delayed funeral. This corpse was possibly handed over to Abbot Thoky as an unidentifiable body, roughly wrapped in lead. Such a cadaver would have been totally unsuitable as the centrepiece of a royal funeral procession. Therefore, the effigy was conceived to stand in place of the body, not only to denote the identity of the unseen remains but also to signal the status and significance of the person being buried. This effigy itself does not survive but that used at the funeral of Edward III does and this artefact affords a reasonable basis from which to

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[112] Ibid, 103.
[113] Chris Given-Wilson, 'The Exequies of Edward III and the Royal Funeral Ceremony In Late Medieval England', *EHR*, 124 (2009), 257-82 at 265-7.
[114] Burden, 'Rite of Passage', 25, 'The funeral effigy... perhaps playing on an element of "likeness" to verify the reality of Edward's death to a credulous public prepared to believe rumours of the king's escape from captivity and his survival in exile.'
[115] Edward II's half brother Edmund Earl of Kent, despite attending the funeral, was later convinced that his brother was still alive and sought to rescue him from Corfe castle where he believed he was being held. He was executed for treason, on account of this, in March 1330. However, the *Brut* chronicle alleged that he had already informed the pope of his beliefs and appealed for his support 'since that a common fame is throughout all England that he [Edward II] was alive and whole and safe', see: Haines, '*Edwardus Redivivus*', 75-6.

conjecture on the appearance of the effigy of Edward II.[116] Both effigies were stipulated as images of the dead king, in very similar terms; Edward II's as 'ymaginem ... similitudinem dicti domini Regis Edwardi defuncti' and Edward III's as 'unius ymaginis ad similitudinem regis'.[117] Yet the effigy of Edward II, produced in 1327, cost 40 shillings (£2) whereas that of Edward III, made fifty years later cost £22 but included in the cost of the latter was 'a sceptre, an orb [and] a cross with a crucifix of gilded silver.'[118] Even after allowing for the additional items included in the cost of the effigy of Edward III a substantial difference in the quality of the effigies has to be accepted. Chris Given-Wilson's description underscores the attention to detail paid in the production of the effigy of Edward III.[119] Moreover this effigy probably featured a plaster cast death mask, an option that would not have been feasible for Edward II, given the long period between death and the commissioning of the effigy. Thus it has to be concluded that the effigy of Edward II, as a prototype, was a much cruder, less lifelike version than that produced for Edward III. Therefore, it would have been of much more significance for this effigy to carry all the accoutrements of kingship in order to serve its intended purpose.

The chronologically and geographically complicated arrangements for the ceremonial funeral of Edward II militate against the idea that he lay in state, on public view, between 22 October and 20 December. Kings, as ritual figures, were not exposed to public view without appropriate preparation. This can be seen in the case of Edward III who lay at Sheen, where he had died, for almost two weeks, while preparations took place, before the start of

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[116] For an image of the effigy of Edward III, see: St. John Hope, 'funeral effigies', plate LVIII.
[117] Burden, 'Rite of Passage', 17; Given-Wilson, 'The Exequies', 265.
[118] Burden, ibid; Given-Wilson, ibid.
[119] Given-Wilson, ibid.

his three-day funeral procession.[120] Moreover public lying in state was not the custom, even for deceased kings; the tradition was that they were taken to the place of burial only the evening before the actual ceremony, to allow for a requiem mass and all night vigil before the actual funeral service.[121] This procedure limited the opportunity for public viewing to the orchestrated open-air processions, often undertaken late in the day, where, surrounded by royal symbolism, mourners, horses, standards and pennants, the impression of seeing the body stemmed from the surrounding identifying paraphernalia and not from an actual clear view of the corpse. This can be inferred from the example of Edward III's funeral processions. Although Given-Wilson suggests that they were designed 'to allow as many as possible of his subjects to view their deceased monarch one last time', it can be suggested that it was only the impression of having seen the king that was possible. [122] For given that '7,511 pounds of wax' had been bought to provide '1700 torches, fifteen great candles and twelve lamps' to surround the king's body during the processions, it is hard to imagine that anyone had a real view of the dead king.[123] Moreover although the body of the king 'or at least his face' lay openly upon the hearse, a 'large canopy...of cloth of gold, with silken fringes' was carried above the hearse, further hindering any clear view of the body as it moved past.[124] Edward III lay at St. Paul's on the penultimate night before his funeral, less than five kilometres from Westminster where he was to be buried. The body of Edward I was also not brought to Westminster until the night before his burial; during the penultimate night he too lay at St. Paul's.[125]

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[120] Ibid, 263.
[121] Ibid, 268-271, details the funerary processions of Edward III.
[122] Ibid, 269.
[123] Ibid, 268.
[124] Ibid, 266.
[125] St. John Hope, 'effigies', 528.

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was only late on the winter day of the 19 December that Edward II emerged into view. This date also coincides with the arrival of the court in Gloucester. A comparatively short procession would then have ensued, the termination of which seems to be memorialised in the naming of a lane and a gate into the abbey King Edward's Lane and King Edward's gate respectively.[126] By 1455 the lane had been renamed Abbey Lane but the gate, despite later rebuilding, retains the appellation.[127] The procession is only noted in the *Historia*, but this tells us that it was accompanied by 'totius civitatis' which, even if true, does not signify a substantial number of people. For the tax roll of 1327 lists only two hundred and sixty-five tax payers in Gloucester, which even if multiplied by all their dependents and the additional non tax-payers remains a significantly smaller number than those who may have viewed the passing of Edward III.[128] Moreover the numbers in the official party are very unlikely to have reached the 'upwards of 2000', that Given-Wilson estimates comprised the cortege of Edward III.[129]

Comparing this funeral to that of Edward III, the paucity of that of Edward II is thrown into sharp relief. There is no mention, or record of costs incurred, of paupers to accompany the procession of Edward II, whereas in the case of Edward III £28 was given to paupers who carried 'lighted torches' during his three day procession.[130] Also missing from the financial records of the funeral of Edward II are alms giving along the processional route. On the final leg of Edward III's procession £470 was distributed to the poor, which, as Given-

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[126] See: Baker and Holt, *Urban Growth*, 103.
[127] *Rental of all the Houses in Gloucester, A.D.1455*, ed. and trans. W. H. Stevenson (Gloucester, 1890), 45.
[128] *Historia*, i, 45; Peter Franklin, *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucestershire* (Stroud, 1993), 27-8.
[129] Given-Wilson, 'The Exequies', 268.
[130] Ibid, 268.

Wilson notes, provided 'a far from negligible incentive to paupers to attend.'[131] Paupers were an integral part of the medieval funerary rites in that their prayers for the deceased were regarded as being of particular benefit to the passage of the soul through purgatory. For example, when Edward II's queen died in 1358 her corpse was 'attended night and day' by fourteen paupers for the three months between death and burial.[132] The absence of the mention of paupers or alms distribution in relation to Edward II is therefore significant, indicative of a superficially appropriate ceremony that lacks the substance of the fully realised ritual.

Of the funeral itself nothing is known. Phillips notes that the *Annales Paulini* records the event as having taken place 'in the presence of his first born son and many magnates'.[133] Nor is it recorded who conducted the service; it may have been the bishop of Landaff, the most senior of the priests in attendance on the body, but still a relatively lowly prelate. Alternatively, it may have been one of the bishops of either Ely or Norwich whose presence, in Gloucester, is indicated by their signing of Charter rolls on the day of the funeral.[134] The more appropriate person to conduct the funeral of a king is seen in the funeral of Edward III, which was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury. The see of Canterbury was technically vacant on the day of Edward II's funeral; therefore, the most senior prelate was William Melton, Archbishop of York.[135] Yet, he was not present at the funeral of Edward II, whom he had served very loyally. Furthermore, there is no

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[131] Ibid, 270.
[132] Brackley, 'Isabella', 26.
[133] Phillips, *Edward II*, 554, n.194.
[134] Ibid.
[135] The previous incumbent, Walter Reynolds had died on 16th November. Simon Mepham had been elected on 11th December and was to assent to the election on the 21st December, see: R. M. Haines, 'An Innocent Abroad: The Career of Simon Mepham Archbishop of Canterbury, 1328-33', *EHR*, 112 (1997), 555-96 at 559.

record of any sermon preached either on this occasion or to mark the passing of the king, whereas several for Edward I survive.[136]

A distinction was also shown by the papacy in the marking of the death of Edward II. For both Edward I and Edward III had solemn exequies performed in the presence of the pope, yet there was no such ceremony performed for Edward II.[137] Thus, it can be seen, that the funeral of Edward II failed to adequately fill the empty space in the narrative of a king, in effect further alienating Edward II from the traditional tropes of divinely appointed kingship. Moreover, it can be argued that it is this emptiness and absence of due form that allowed the later rumours of the survival of Edward II. For although some individuals, such as Archbishop Melton of York, did respond in an appropriate manner, offering an indulgence to all who prayed for the soul of Edward there was no centralised coherent view as to how this death should be treated.[138] Furthermore, Archbishop Melton, himself later became convinced that the funeral had been a sham and that Edward II was alive in 1330.[139]

The funeral was in itself unusual in that this, almost certainly, was the first occasion on which an effigy was used in place of the open display of the corpse.[140] Moreover, there was no attempt made to reassure the people that

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[136] D. L. D'Avray, Death and the Prince, memorial preaching before 1350 (Oxford, 1994), 70-9.

[137] W. Ullman, 'The Curial Exequies for Edward I and Edward III', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1955), 26-36 at 26.

[138] Raine, *Historical Papers*, 355-6, the letter refers to Edward II as, 'dudum illustrem regem Angliae' and offers an indulgence of forty days to all who pray for his soul. Moreover it orders that all priests are to say three masses for the soul of the king before Christmas. The letter seems misdated, by the editor, to October 23, 1328.

[139] R. M. Haines, 'Sumptuous Apparel for a Royal Prisoner: Archbishop Melton's Letter, 14 January 1330', *EHR*, 124 (2009), 885-94.

[140] Giesey, *Royal Funeral*, 82.

their king had died in a state of grace.[141] Thus it can be seen that, even by the date of transfer of the body from Berkeley to Gloucester, the securing of Edward II within the established pantheon of Christian kings was unachievable. The greatest hindrance to achieving this goal was the lack of the administration of the last rites. In the absence of this, a will could be looked to confirm that the dead person had died only after having attended to their personal salvation.[142] This had been the case in death of Edward I, who died suddenly, after waking, before the last rites could be administered. A chronicler counters this negative by reference to his will, which, the writer suggests, will ensure his salvation.[143] The same chronicle, in reference to the death of Edward II, can find no such consolation and merely states that he died while in custody and was buried in Gloucester.[144] Thus however grand the funeral, and in this case it was not grand in any substantive sense, it alone could not compensate for the deficiencies in the death and immediate post death treatment of Edward II. In considering this, it is not surprising that people took measures to explain away the *perceived deficits in the demise of Edward II.* For the king, as the ultimate symbol of the nation, was a figure whose reputation was spiritually melded to theirs.

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[141] Daniell, *Death*, 49, 'The burial of the person does not seem to have been important in comparison to the last rites'.

[142] Ibid, 32, 'The dying person was responsible for leaving both the material and spiritual estates in good order by writing a will'; C. Gross, 'The Medieval Law of Intestacy', *Harvard Law Review*, 18 (1904-05), 120-31 at 120, 'The intestate was regarded with horror as an infamous person who had died unconfessed ... The intestate, therefore must have died without providing for his salvation'.

[143] 'Annales Paulini', in *Chronicles* ed. Stubbs, I, 256, 'Et condito testamento exitumque suum vivificis muniens sacramentis, inclinato capite spiritum in manus reddidit Salvatoris' (After having formed a will, strengthening his exit with the life giving sacraments, with bowed head he gave back his spirit into the hands of the saviour).

[144] Ibid, i, 337, 'in castello de Berkele, ubi in custodia tenebatur; et supultus fuit in abbatia de Gloucestria' (in the castle of Berkeley, where he was being kept in custody, and buried in the abbey of Gloucester).

Chapter 4

The *Vita et Mors* - an overlooked hagiography?

A Latin chronicle of the reign and death of Edward II known as the *Vita et Mors,* authored by Geoffrey le Baker, a secular clerk, appears a deliberate attempt to provide a hagiography for the king.[1] Over one third of the account deals exclusively with the imprisonment and death of the king. This emphasis on nine months of time within an overall span of twenty years (1307-1327) demonstrates the paramount significance of this period to the narrative. The author tells the story of Edward's imprisonment as a mirror of the trials and tribulations suffered by Christ in a strand of medieval exegesis known as the 'secret passion' of Christ (secret because it is not openly given in the Bible).[2] The 'secret passion' of Christ was a tradition of understanding of the sufferings endured by Christ between his capture and death, which

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[1] Stubbs, *Chronicles,* ii, 297-319; Preest and Barber *Geoffrey le Baker,* 1-32. For a summary of the little that is known of le Baker, see: Preest and Barber, ibid, xiii-xv.

[2] For a brief summary of the textual evolution of this form of passion literature see: James Marrow, 'Circumdederunt me canes multi: Christ's Tormenters in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *The Art Bulletin,* 59 (1977), 167-81 at 167. James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Belgium, 1979), details several torments in his fourth chapter titled 'The Secret Passion', 95-170. In his introduction, at 8, he suggests that the development of affective piety in the eleventh and twelfth centuries led to an 'evolution of passion literature', which encompassed 'increasingly extravagant interpretations'. The term 'secret passion' is defined in a review of this book, as 'the generic name given to a group of Passion tracts that from the fourteenth century onwards fill out the Gospel account with descriptions of a whole variety of torments, all ingeniously culled and conflated from a wide range of Old Testament prophecies, similes, and metaphors', see: David Freeberg, 'Review', *Speculum,* 57 (1982), 395-7 at 396. The dissemination of such texts in England was thought to have been witnessed by the translation of the late thirteenth century *Meditationes Vitae Christi* by Pseudo-Bonaventure into English by Robert Mannyng of Brunne between 1315 and 1330, see: *Meditations on the Supper of our Lord, and the Hours of the Passion,* ed. J.M Cowper (London, 1875). The date and authorship of this text has subsequently been authoratively challenged and now it is believed that the *Meditations* is a mid or late fourteenth century translation from earlier archetypes and not the work of Robert Mannyng, see: Ryan Perry, '"Thynk on God, as we doon, men that swynke": The Cultural Locations of *Meditations on the Supper of Our Lord* and the Middle English Pseudo-Bonaventuran Tradition', *Speculum* 86 (2011), 419-54.

compounded and enlarged upon the accounts in the gospels with inferences and allusions from the Old Testament.[3] Such accounts incorporate 'extreme representations of brutality and violence', meant to portray the torture of the human Christ, before and during his crucifixion.[4] The preoccupation with the tortured and broken body of Christ was a feature of many devotional texts of the period, of which those of the 'secret passion' trope represent the most extreme.[5] One of the features of these narratives was the degree to which they represented Christ as being treated as a 'public spectacle of degradation and intense suffering' in the manner 'of the despised, the outcast, the dangers to society, that are to be excluded and persecuted, namely lepers and Jews.'[6]

The intention of such accounts, James Marrow argues, was to invoke a 'broad spectrum of human feelings including pity, compassion, sorrow, guilt, gratitude and admiration.'[7] These emotions are synonymous with those that Baker seeks to evoke for Edward II. Baker demonstrably bases his descriptions of the humiliations and assaults on Edward on contemporary ideas of the abuses of Christ, found in a range of texts and images including the Latin archetypes of the *Meditations Vitae Christi* by Pseudo-Bonaventure.[8] Such works represented a trope of thought that had become

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[3] Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 191, argues that such writings and imagery were premised on the teachings of church fathers in that 'St Augustine...claimed that everything written in the books of the Hebrew prophets referred directly or indirectly to Christ. Isidore of Seville saw explicit prefigurations of Christ in both the words and deeds of such Old Testament patriarchs as Job and Jeremias.'

[4] T. H. Bestul, 'The Passion of Christ and the Institution of Torture' in *Texts of the Passion* (Philadelphia, 1996), 145-64 at 149, argues that 'the trajectory of increasing bodily violence in the narrative representations of the Passion is paralleled by and related to...the rise in the thirteenth century of the systemic use of judicial torture'.

[5] See: A. C. Clarke and T. H. Bestul, eds., *Cultures of Piety* (Ithaca, New York, 1999).

[6] Bestul, 'Passion of Christ', 157.

[7] Marrow, Passion Iconography, 8.

[8] Perry, "Thynk on God", 422.

widely disseminated and was well understood.[9] This *intentional paralleling of the sufferings of Christ* with those of Edward is designed to provide a compelling analogue of Edward's sanctity. Through this construction Baker shapes Edward as a Christ like figure whose death can be viewed as conforming to the matter if not the manner of Christ's passion.

While it has been argued that the *Vita et Mors* is only the earlier part of a chronicle, known as the *Chronicon*, that covers the reigns of Edward II and a large part of the reign of Edward III, some believe that this is an erroneous view and that the chronicle known as the *Vita et Mors* was intended as a discrete entity.[10] Richard Barber, the most recent editor of Baker's *Chronicon*, suggests that Baker 'completed the text as a single work down to 1356, then planned to separate his work into the two reigns' - a task that he argues was only completed to 1329.[11] However, although the events described in the *Chronicon* end with the battle of Poitiers of September 1356,

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[9] Ibid, 'the text's relative popularity in England outstripped its considerable success in the rest of Europe'. James Marrow, 'Inventing the passion in the late middle ages' in M. Kupfer, ed, *The Passion Story* (Pennsylvania, 2009), 23-52 at 42, describes the *Meditations* as 'one of the most widely circulated devotional texts of the thirteenth century'. However, as has been argued in relation to Chaucer's Parson's Tale, the ideas of Christ's 'secret passion' rapidly diffused to become 'commonplace of that tradition' and therefore impossible to ascribe to a specific text, see: T. Bestul, 'Chaucer's Parson's Tale and the Late Medieval Tradition of Religious Meditation', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 600-19 at 609.

[10] This is because the earliest known copy of the *Vita*, in Bodley MS 761, is immediately followed by Baker's chronicle of the reign of Edward III. This has led to the view that Baker's writings on Edward II and Edward III formed a single entity, which has become known as the *Chronicon*. Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, lix, in his introduction to the *Vita*, asserts that it 'is really only an extract' of the *Chronicon* 'abridged and slightly altered in the earlier parts'. However, Stubbs offers no argument or evidence to support this contention. Moreover, the *Vita*, although it ends with the punishment of the murderers of Edward II in 1330, does not mention the coronation of Edward III in 1327, suggesting that the *Vita* was presented as a stand-alone piece, that concerns the life and death of Edward II and is not an extract of a larger history. Haines, *Church and Politics*, 102-16, discusses the works of Geoffrey Le Baker. He observes that the *Chronicon* survives in only one manuscript copy, Bodley MS 761 and that '[a] part of the *Chronicon* covering the reign of Edward III only is to be found in B.L. Cotton MS. Appendix LII' from which he suggests that 'there were separate chronicles for the two reigns'. This view seems substantiated by there being evidence of the existence of five Tudor copies of the *Vita* see: Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, lviii-lix.

[11] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, xxiv-xxv.

the closing line refers to two years subsequent to this, indicating a terminal date of about September 1358 for work on the *Chronicon*.[12] If, as Barber suggests, it was only after completing the *Chronicon* that Baker decided to re-write it, dividing it into separate accounts for the two reigns, then September 1358 appears to be about the time at which he stopped writing of the reign of Edward III and re-visited his account of the reign of Edward II. There may be a previously unconsidered significance to this chronology, in that Isabella, queen of Edward II, died in August 1358. It can be posited that this event provided the impetus to produce the *Vita et Mors* in its current form, premised on the contemporary belief that the demise of those responsible for a martyr's death initiated the canonisation of the victim.[13]

Isabella is the undisputed villain of Baker's *Vita et Mors*. Although she is initially portrayed as manipulated in her antipathy for her husband, by Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, her vindictive hatred of her husband grows to such a point, that ultimately it is she that manipulates Orleton into engineering the murder of Edward II. Baker, in the chronicle, also reveals his adherence to the biblically derived belief that the recognition of martyrdom was completed with the death of the perpetrators. This belief was extrapolated from verses in the book of Revelation, which are alluded to in the chronicle. Baker says 'I heard it with the church from the voices of the murdered innocents below the altar of God.'[14] That Baker says he has heard this cry for recognition 'with the church' (cum ecclesia) extends the

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12 Ibid, 134, 'But for two years afterwards no such wished for peace was signed.'
13 For the same belief applied to the case of Thomas of Lancaster, associated with a revival of his cult and reports of his canonisation, see: Given-Wilson, 'Lancastrian Inheritance', 569.
14 Revelation 6:9-11, 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: / And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth"? / And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 25 and n.5.

understanding from him as an individual; he presents it as an accepted perspective of the church as a whole.[15] Moreover, Baker prefaces his biblical reference with a quote from Quintilian, which is that '[t]he murdered man defeats his tormentors', a view that he emphasises by adding that he 'truly' believes this.[16] Baker through this provides a nexus of ideas, which suggests that both classical thought and biblical teaching agree on this point. Although this passage does not refer directly to the murder of the king (it is associated with the death of Robert Baldock, captured with Edward in Wales), it reveals the trajectory and basis of his thoughts on such matters.[17] Given Baker's overt reference to the view that martyrs would be recognised after the death of their tormentors, the death of Isabella can be understood as an appropriate stimulus to write a hagiography for the king.

Geoffrey le Baker had previously penned a very brief history, known as the *Chroniculum*, at the request of his patron, Sir Thomas de la More.[18] As the *Vita et Mors* draws on More's eyewitness account of the deposition of Edward II, it is entirely possible that Baker similarly wrote the *Vita et Mors* at More's request.[19] The inference that More was the patron of the *Vita et Mors* is

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[15] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 312.

[16] Preest and Baker, *le Baker*, 25 and n.4.

[17] Robert Baldock, bishop of London, may have been involved in a mission to secure Edward's divorce from Isabella and was one of the instigators of the removal of Isabella's lands and rents. He was denounced by Isabella, as a despoiler of the church, in a proclamation of 15 October 1326. See: Haines, *Edward II*, 325, 180.

[18] For the *Chroniculum*, see: Edward Maunde Thompson, *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke* (Oxford, 1889), 156-75. R. M. Haines, *Archbishop John Stratford*, (Toronto, 1986), 408, identifies Sir Thomas de la More as 'an Oxfordshire knight who was twice returned to parliament in 1338, twice in 1340, and again in 1343 and 1351.'

[19] Thomas de la More was a nephew to John Stratford, bishop of Winchester at the time of the deposition (later to become chancellor and archbishop of Canterbury). More, as a member of Stratford's entourage, was present at the renunciation at Kenilworth, see: R. M. Haines, *Archbishop John Stratford* (Toronto, 1986), 408-9. Baker claims that More wrote an eyewitness account of the renunciation in French and that he was merely the 'poor interpreter' of his account see: Preest and Barber, *Geoffrey le Baker*, 26. More's account has never been traced but it may have borne some semblance to the *Pipewell Chronicle*, discussed in chapter 1.

substantiated by a passage that refers directly to him and an authorial aside addressed to 'miles reverende' that is understood as referring to More.[20] In contrast there is no reference, direct or indirect, to More in Baker's account of the reign of Edward III. This may indicate that More was instrumental in the production of the *Vita et Mors* but not the chronicle of the reign of Edward III. However, it also has to be allowed that the *Vita et Mors* may represent Baker's understanding rather than that of his patron. For although More is known to have been returned to parliament in 1351 nothing certain is known of him after this date and he may have died before Baker commenced his re-writing.

Besides drawing upon More's eyewitness account of the deposition Baker also claims to have had information from a William Bishop, head of Edward's guards, for his journey from Kenilworth to Berkeley. This information is said to have been given after the Black Death of 1348.[21] Baker alleges that this so far unidentified character gave his story as a penitential act in the hope of securing divine forgiveness for his sins against Edward.[22] This reveals the thrust of Baker's narrative, which is that Edward was an innocent, unjustly persecuted, in contempt of the will of God, who can now be recognised as a saint. As Phillips says, the *Vita et Mors* 'seems to have been designed to give the impression that Edward's sufferings were a sign of sanctity'.[23]

The *Vita et Mors* provides the most vivid and dramatic account of Edward II's imprisonment and death. Although the resemblances between Baker's account of the imprisonment and accounts of Christ's passion have been commented upon, it has hitherto not been considered as an intentional

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[20] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 313, n.1 and 316, n.1.
[21] Ibid, 317, 'post magnam pestilentiam'.
[22] Ibid, 'unde confessus et contritus poenituit, sub spe misericordiae divinae.'
[23] Phillips, *Edward II*, 14.

hagiographic account of the death of Edward II.[24] Indeed, Haines goes so far as to say '[i]t is legitimate to pour scorn on his [Baker's] embellishments'.[25] This view is perhaps the perception of a historian, seeking to uncover the truth of a situation but this was not Baker's intent in his writing. He was providing an analogue that elevated Edward II's sanctity from murdered king to redeemer of England. He uses a meld of contemporary accounts and inferences as a framework and builds from this to reshape Edward's captivity, after he leaves Kenilworth, into a mirror of Christ's 'secret passion'. Yet to succeed as a hagiography Baker also had to demonstrate that Edward not only suffered as Christ suffered but also that he was a man of virtue. For as Aviad Kleinberg argues, after 1234, 'when papal canonization finally replaced all other forms of official recognition', the papal canonists, to whom the task of investigating claims to sanctity fell, looked to proof of the candidate's orthodoxy, virtue and miraculous capability.[26]

Baker, in his account of Edward II's imprisonment, projects an image of Edward that demonstrates his conformity to the canonist's criteria of virtue. This is despite the view that for martyrs, as opposed to confessors, 'life, previous to his passion, was quite irrelevant'.[27] However, not only did Edward's reputation prior to his deposition not suggest him as a candidate for sanctity, but his alleged martyrdom took place outside public view. His death therefore lacked the witness accounts of the 'exchange of threats, physical and spiritual, between the saint and the tyrant', which preceded the 'gruesome execution' to form an account that would 'persuade the reader of the martyr's election.'[28] Baker therefore sought to create an interpretation of

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[24] Haines, *Edward II*, 227, 'Edward's ill treatment at the hands of his gaolers represents the "passion" of the king – a literary device in vogue at the time.' Phillips, *Edward II*, 14.
[25] Haines, ibid.
[26] Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', 190, 199.
[27] Ibid, 185.
[28] Ibid.

Edward that would convince its audience that he died as a virtuous martyr, at the hands of a tyrant, for a love 'than which a greater does not exist.'[29]

Baker's account of the king prior to his deposition is carefully nuanced to present him as a noble personage. He marries Isabella out of love, kindled by '[t]he fire of the Holy Spirit' and the birth of the future Edward III brings the king 'joy' for the child and his wife 'whom he loved deeply and cherished tenderly'.[30] Edward's failings as a monarch are excused through the implication that both Gaveston and Hugh the Younger 'bewitched' his mind.[31] Early in his narration, Baker secures Edward as a person of spiritual significance by alleging that his escape after the battle of Bannockburn was a miracle wrought by Christ in answer to the prayers of the Virgin Mary.[32] Yet it is Edward's response to his deposition that signals the metamorphosis of Edward II's nature from noble, if misguided, to divine. The deposition is presented as a transformative and considered self-sacrifice by Edward II. Edward, Baker says, was

prepared to lay down his life for Christ rather than witness his son's disinheritance or the disturbance of the kingdom and knowing that a good shepherd would give his life for his sheep.[33]

[29] Ibid.
[30] Preest and Barber, le Baker, 3, 6.
[31] Ibid, 10, 'There were those among them who said that Hugh was a second king, or worse, the ruler of the king, and that, like Piers Gaveston, he had bewitched the king's mind.'
[32] Ibid, 8, 'no human skill or speed of horses or hiding places could have kept them safe from capture by the Scots, if Christ, who passed through the middle of the Jews unrecognised, had not listened to the prayers of his mother and rescued the king from Scottish lands.'
[33] Stubbs, Chronicles, ii, 313, 'paratior pro Christo vitam finire, quam suorum filiorum exheredationem, aut regni diuturnam peterbationem, oculis viventis corporis videre, sciens quod bonus pastor animam suam poneret pro ovibus suis'. The biblical verses referenced in this are found in John 10:11.

In this Baker records Edward's two reasons for acquiescing to the end of his rule as being to ensure his son's inheritance and to save the kingdom from civil disturbance.[34] Edward's positive response to these two inducements immediately casts him in a favourable light, the first demonstrating his very human love for his son and the second his profound concern for his people. Moreover, both inducements are accepted at his personal cost, showing that he cares more for his son and his people than for himself. Baker by wrapping these characteristics in Christological phrasing moves Edward II from being a follower of Christ to becoming an emulation of him, in allusion to Christ's sacrifice of his own life for his people. By this parataxis of circumstance Baker is claiming that Edward was fully aware that the price he would pay, for the sake of his people and to secure his son's inheritance, would be his own life. The implication beyond this is that Edward also realised that his death, like Christ's, would be cruel.

Having secured this platform of understanding Baker carries this forward into his account of Edward's post deposition imprisonment. The *Vita et Mors* accords with the fact that initially Edward stayed at Kenilworth under the charge of Henry of Lancaster. Baker says of this time that Edward was 'lacking nothing that a recluse and monk would need' (*nullo egens quo reclusus et monasticus indigebat*).[35] The implication of this is that his imprisonment at Kenilworth was austere, but there is no complaint of ill treatment. This clause also connects Edward II with two positive images: those of the recluse and monk. The association engendered by this was that Edward was now a cloistered or enclosed person whose life was dedicated to

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[34] Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 75, argues that the Christian king's 'overriding concern was...with the attainment of national *felicitas* – with *pax*'.
[35] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 315.

God.[36] This perception is compounded by Baker's account of Edward II's post deposition character. He re-iterates the virtuous nature and piety of the former king, describing him as 'the noble lord Edward, formerly king' who 'patiently accepted the loss of his crown and his freedom for the love of Christ, poor and crucified'.[37] Although the descriptor of Christ as 'poor and crucified' performs as a prefigurative allusion to the fate of Edward II, there are other indicators of Edward's claim to sanctity in this sentence. Edward's patience in adversity confirms him in what was regarded as the primary virtue of the canonists' framework for recognising sanctity, 'the ability to bear persecutions *ex charitate* [sic]'.[38] Moreover, the love of Christ was the 'love, than which a greater does not exist'.[39]

Baker uses the period of imprisonment at Kenilworth as the opportunity to refine his picture of Edward II, promoting his love for his wife and children, an aspect of character that reflects the 'central role that the humanity of Christ began to assume in the piety of the time.'[40] He describes Edward, as

> brought down to the lowest point, grieving for nothing except that his wife, of whose embraces he has been deprived for more than a year, whom he finds himself incapable of not loving, does not wish to see him and prevents his children, including his son, the new king, from offering the solace of their company.[41]

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[36] Baker's image of Edward II as having voluntarily given up the throne and as dedicating his life to God conforms to the precepts of Anglo-Saxon royal sanctity. See: Nelson, 'Royal saints', 41; Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 235, 'Sanctity was founded upon the renunciation of royal status, upon commitment to the alternative goal of the religious life and upon the adoption in pursuit of that goal of conduct antithetical to that implied by royal birth.'

[37] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 314, 'gratiosus dominus Edwardus quondam rex regiae coronae et libertatis privationem pro amore Jesu Christi pauperis crucifixi patienter admittens'.

[38] Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', 199.

[39] Ibid, 185.

[40] Ibid, 187.

[41] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 315, 'nullum infortunium in ima depressus deplanxit nisi quod uxor sua, quam non potuit non amare, nolebat ipsum videre, cujus amplexibus plus quam per annum vixit viduatus, et quod nec illa permisit filium suum novum regem, aut aliquem suorum liberorum sibi praesentiale solatium praebere'.

This wholly human and emotive description of Edward effectively opens his character to an affective audience response, inviting compassion and empathy. Furthermore, this sentence provides the initial undermining of the character of Isabella; it is she who is the sole cause of Edward's grief.

Baker symbolises Edward's love of his wife by likening him to an Orpheus, singing love charms, but to no avail.[42] In this Baker presents the enduring love of Edward for Isabella as a paradox, for she is the chief agent of his downfall and misery. This serves two purposes in the narrative; firstly, the ability to love one's enemies is one of the greatest Christian virtues and in continuing to love Isabella Edward is representing this.[43] Secondly the notion of Edward's enduring love affords an opportunity to explore Isabella's base nature and shape her as the tyrant of Edward's martyrdom. The analogy being intimated in the Vita is that Orpheus' love and ability fails to free his wife, even momentarily, from the underworld.

In Greek legend Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, was lost to the underworld through no fault of her own. She was being pursued by a son of Apollo and in her efforts to evade this threat stepped on a poisonous snake, which delivered a fatal bite to her heel. Orpheus, famed for his facility on the lyre, journeys to the underworld where he charms Hades into permitting his wife to return with him to the real world. The only condition placed on this was that as Eurydice follows Orpheus, he may not look back. In this task he fails; he looks back and his adored wife is lost to him forever. Versions of this legend were transmitted in the medieval period by a variety of redactions,

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[42] Ibid, 315, 'Quot amorosa delectamenta voce submissa, tanquam alter Orpheus concinuit, sed incassum.'

[43] Matthew 5:44, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you'.

translations, commentaries and re-interpretations, including the romance *Sir Orfeo*, which was composed 'within a few years of 1330'.[44] In *Sir Orfeo*, his wife (Heurodis) is bewitched and afterwards stolen by the fairy king. Orfeo, pre-warned of the bewitching, still fails to prevent the kidnap of his wife and in his grief abandons his kingdom for ten years, leaving it in the charge of his steward. After his decade in the wilderness, he recovers his wife and kingdom and out of gratitude to the steward makes him his heir. However, neither *Sir Orfeo* nor the Greek versions of the story match with the analogy presented by Baker, where Edward absolutely fails to rescue his wife. This suggests that Baker was inferring a different understanding of Orpheus and his wife rather than that of Greek legend or *Sir Orfeo*. His interpretation may lean more towards that of William of Conches, a twelfth century philosopher. Conches' commentary on the legend regards Eurydice as 'remarkably like Eve' and 'fair prey for Satan'.[45] Furthermore, this commentary suggests that 'Orpheus is a type of Christ, who out of his own goodness provided a wife for himself...but through the teeth of the serpent, that is to say, by the counsel of Satan...lost her.'[46] This view of Orpheus as inherently good and Eurydice as susceptible if not complicit in her own downfall conforms to the argument that Baker is presenting. The premise that Baker offers is that although everyone else recognises Isabella as wicked and irredeemable, Edward, like Christ and like Orpheus seeks to rescue her, as a lost soul, from the underworld and restore her to the model of marital felicity or the perfection

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[44] O. Falk, 'The Son of Orfeo: Kingship and Compromise in a Middle English Romance', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 30 (2000), 247-74 at 249. Falk, in this paper, argues for the close relationship between the romance and the political circumstances of Edward II and Isabella, centred on the siege of Leeds castle in 1321, an opening gambit for the civil war that ensued.

[45] J. B. Friedman, 'Eurydice, Heurodis, and the Noon-Day Demon', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 22-9, at 24.

[46] Ibid.

of Christian love.[47] That he, in the *Vita*, fails to do so, demonstrates her proclivity for maleficence rather than any lack on his part.

In parallel with Baker's expression of Edward's view of his wife he also, as narrator, offers his own characterisations of Isabella. This changes after the deposition; before this she is described as 'not malicious but badly guided' (non animo malitioso sed maleducto) but afterwards he describes her as a 'ferocious lioness' (truculenta leena) and an 'iron harridan' (ferrea virago), 'whose heart was as hard as the hardest iron' (corde duriori incude adamantino).[48] The effect of increasing the moral distance between Isabella and Edward is to heighten the appreciation of Edward's continuing love for her, as a marvellous sign of righteousness. Moreover, the contrast between the two characters intensifies the representation of both; the more wicked Isabella appears the more saintly Edward seems.

The Transfer of Edward from Kenilworth to Berkeley

Baker claims that the main reason for transferring Edward to Berkeley was that the queen was afraid that 'she would be forced through the church to show mercy to the wretched, to share again the conjugal bed with the rejected man'.[49] The secondary reason that he offers was that the queen feared that Lancaster was 'showing compassion to Edward his cousin' (Eduardo suo consanguineo compaciebatur).[50] Retrospectively at least, it came to be understood that the transfer of Edward II from the custody of

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[47] J. F. Knapp, 'The Meaning of *Sir Orfeo*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 29 (1968), 263-73 at 269, 'The conflict in *Sir Orfeo* may be described in terms of a mythic hero attempting to deliver his world from the powers of darkness.'

[48] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 310, 315. The image of Isabella as a 'ferocious lioness' accords with the ideas of the 'Secret Passion' which saw Christ beleaguered by wild animals including lions, derived from Psalm 21: 21-22, see: Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 27.

[49] Stubbs, ibid, 315, 'ne unquam, per ecclesiam miserorum consuetam miscreri, foret compulsa viro repudiato iterum impartiri thorum.'

[50] Ibid.

Lancaster to that of Mortimer partisans represented the end of him being kept honourably, with regard to his estate and the start of his 'cruel treatment'.[51] How much of this view is ascribable to Baker is impossible to tell but he certainly utilises the change of Edward's keeping as a significant event in his plot development.[52] Isabella at this point in his narrative demonstrates increasingly evil characteristics and conversely Edward's characteristics become more saintly. She is 'advised by the priest of Baal, bishop of Hereford' whereas he says of Edward that 'the rich fragrance of all his virtues [made everyone] to be inclined to pity him'.[53] These linkages, of Isabella to devilry and Edward to sanctity, become more pronounced in Baker's account of the journey from Kenilworth to Berkeley, in that he imagines this journey as a likeness of Christ's journey from betrayal to execution.

From the outset, the guards are brutal in their treatment of Edward; the implication is that this is on Isabella's instructions. It is only after detailing the inhumanity of their behaviour (forcing Edward to ride lightly dressed with his head uncovered; not allowing him to sleep; giving him hateful food; contradicting his every word; claiming that he was mad) that the purpose of this is revealed.[54] The intent was 'so that he might die of cold, of lack of

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[51] *The Lament of Edward II*, line 17, 'Pener me fount cruelement'.
[52] Haines, *Edward II*, 346, this view could also be inferred from the summary of the charges against Roger Mortimer, which alleges that Mortimer ordered the transfer to Berkeley 'by accroachment to himself of royal power...where by him and his men he was traitorously, feloniously and falsely murdered.'
[53] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 315, 'ad consilium sui sacerdotis Baal episcopi Herefordiae...omnium virtutum uberem fragrantiam ad pietem sui incinavit'; see: Haines, *Church and Politics*, 102-16 for a comparison of Baker's accounting of Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, against other contemporary evidence and sources. The projection of Adam Orleton as a priest of Baal associates him with the biblical story of Elijah and Ahab given in 1 Kings:18. This connection invites the perception of Isabella as the Jezebel to Orleton's priest of Baal, an insinuation that is further aided by Jezebel rhyming with Isabel.
[54] Stubbs, ibid, 316, 'Equitare compulerunt exiliter indutum, caput habere discoopertum, volentem dormire non permiserunt; non quos volebat, sed quos nausebat, cibos ipsi praeparavere, verbo suo cuilibet contradixere, vesanum esse calumniati sunt.'

sleep, unwanted food or even of melancholia or any common disease'.[55] The connotation is that Isabella wishes her husband dead and has instructed the guards accordingly. This part of the narrative compounds the understanding of Isabella as evil and promotes the image of Edward as patiently bearing his oppressions. In this Baker is invoking the biblical verse '[h]e was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter'.[56] This verse links Edward to Christ, in that this verse in Isaiah was understood as prefiguring a verse in Matthew, where Christ remains silent in the face of false accusations before the high priest prior to his passion.[57] This section of Edward's journey also reflects the primary stage of Christ's torments, after his arrest, according to 'secret passion' accounts, where he is 'led barefoot through thorns and thistles'.[58]

After these attempts to end Edward's life fail the guards resort to poisoning him. At this point, the guards are termed 'kinsmen of the Devil' (propinaverunt suo domino ministri Belial) and Edward 'the servant of God' (gratia Dei patientiae).[59] These opposing descriptors secure Edward as virtuous and all those who seek to harm him as nefarious. Edward by 'natural strength' (fortitudine naturali) fails to succumb to the poison.[60] Baker's comment on this is that he believes that the Almighty saved him for a more

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[55] Ibid, 'ut frigore, ut vigiliis, et cibis intemperatis, aut fastiditis, aut saltem prae melancholia aut infirmitate correptus expiraret.'

[56] Isaiah 53: 7.

[57] Matthew 26: 63.

[58] Marrow, Passion Iconography, 27.

[59] Stubbs, Chronicles, ii, 316.

[60] This story may reference the legend of St John the Evangelist who when handed a cup of poisoned wine, pronounced a blessing over it, which caused the poison to remove itself, in the form of a snake, see: Ferguson, Signs & Symbols, 126. Alternatively, contemporary literature such as the Golden Legend included poisoning as one of the tortures endured by St. George and as he was contemporaneously being promoted as a national saint of England, the story may have been adopted from his or some other martyrological account. See: Samantha Riches, St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth (Stroud, 2000), 101-09, 218-19.

magnificent martyrdom.[61] This remark presages both an evolution in the guard's treatment of Edward and an intensification of Baker's allusions to the sanctity of Edward. However, before detailing these Baker interpolates another personal comment into the text, addressed to his patron, to the effect that he could say more on this were he not fearful of those still living.[62] The import of this is to increase his audience's perception of the continuing menace and reach of Edward's enemies.[63] Besides this, the interjection informs the audience that what is about to be told is an expurgated version, which falls short of detailing the full horrors of Edward's tribulations. This is because the next stage of Edward's journey is told as an echo of the more severe humiliations of Christ before his crucifixion. Baker's disclaimer serves to imply that Edward did indeed suffer all the indignities detailed in 'secret passion' accounts, but that he is too afraid to tell the full story.[64] Through this technique, Baker invites his audience to imagine even grosser mistreatment of Edward than that of which he writes. For he refrains from fully encompassing the full depravity of contemporary understandings,

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[61] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 316, 'quod verius credo, manifestori martyrio suum confessorem Altissimus reservavit.'

[62] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 29, 'Respected sir, I am writing about well attested happenings, which would crash their thunders over the world in a brighter light, if fear of the pious king's enemies still alive did not stop men from making clear the truth which cannot be hidden for ever.'

[63] Accepting that this chronicle was written after 1348, two of those impugned by Baker were already dead - Adam Orleton (d.1345) and Thomas Gurney (d.1333) – the latter being one of the two that Baker accuses of the murder of Edward II. Therefore, this could only refer to either Isabella or John Maltravers – the second person accused of the murder by Baker. John Maltravers was pardoned by Edward III in 1351 and died in England in 1364, see: Phillips, *Edward II*, 572-6. J. S. Bothwell, 'Agnes Maltravers (d.1375) and her Husband John (d.1364): Rebel Wives, Separate Lives and Conjugal Visits in Late Medieval England' in *Fourteenth Century England, IV*, ed. J. S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), 80-92 at 88, 'By June 1351, John Maltravers' properties, both those held of the king and other lords, were ordered to be returned in full in parliament, and his position effectively restored.'

[64] These included, the breaking of all his teeth, being trampled and jumped upon, an all night beating and being burned all over his body, see: Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 27.

in which Christ 'is covered with excrement, forced to drink from a channel, shaved, enclosed in a cesspool, and trodden underfoot'.[65]

The humiliations start with the guards, now termed 'officials of Satan', crowning Edward with hay, in direct imitation of Christ's crown of thorns.[66] Baker uses this incident to remind his audience of Edward's other claim to a high position in the spiritual hierarchy, that of him being a God's anointed; he says the crown of hay is 'for the head already consecrated by holy oil'.[67] This premise also links Edward to Christ in that Christ was mockingly termed king of the Jews. Baker further promotes the link between Edward and Christ by having the guards, within the story, recognise the similarity of Edward to Christ and ironically decide to act out the biblical account of the mocking of Christ, saying 'Fare forth, syr kyng'.[68] The use of the vernacular for the words of the guard underscores his base nature and adds a touch of realism to the account.

The next humiliation is to sit the king on a molehill and propose to shave him with cold water from a ditch, which mirrors the shaving of Christ of 'secret passion' accounts.[69] This humiliation, Baker tells his audience Edward suffers with the patience of Saint Job (cum beato Job).[70] The comparison of Edward

[65] Patrick Ryan, 'Marlowe's Edward II and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama*, 32 (1998-9), 465-95 at 465. For an understanding of the symbolism of the scatological aspects of 'secret passion' narratives see: M. Bayless, 'The Story of the Fallen Jew and the Iconography of Jewish Unbelief', *Viator*, 34 (2003), 146-56, *passim*.
[66] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 316, 'satrapis Sathanae...ubi de feono factam coronam capiti'.
[67] Ibid, 'iamdudum per oleum sanctum consecrato'.
[68] Ibid, 'ausus contingere Christum Dei: cui illundentes ironia nimis acerba milites dixerunt, "Fare forth, syr kynge"'; Mark 15: 16-18, 'And the soldiers led him away...and they call together the whole band. / And they clothed him with purple and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. / And began to salute him, Hail King of the Jews.'
[69] Cowper ed., *Meditations*, lines 965-72, 'Whan lewes had dampned hym deþ for to haue / Shamely berde and hede gun bey shaue / The euangelystys telle nat of þys doyng / For þey myzte nat wryte alle þyng / Of hys berde y fynde a resun / whyche seyd Isaye yn goddys persone / "My body y jaue to men smytyng / And also my chekes to men grubbyng".'
[70] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 317.

to Job suggests that Edward, like Job, endures his misfortune, without any diminution in his love of God.[71] Moreover, Job's reaction to his tribulations was to shave his head, which furthers his connection to Edward at this point. It could be argued that the two shavings are significantly different in that Job voluntarily shaved his head as a grief ritual, whereas Edward is involuntarily shaved, so that he should not be recognised.[72] Yet, Edward subverts the persecution of the shaving by crying himself a bowl of warm water to facilitate the process, rather than accepting the offered bowl of cold ditch water.[73] In this, Edward is changed from victim to active participant. Saul Olyan finds that shaving, in the several representations given in the Bible, signals a range of understandings: as a 'component of purification'; as effecting 'separation'; and as 'effecting and marking submission to the deity'.[74] However, he finds commonality in that '[i]n each case, they effect a change in an individual's status.'[75] Baker's intent in his particularised description of this imagined event is to invoke all the biblical significances of shaving as indicators of Edward's prescient acceptance of his forthcoming martyrdom.

After Edward's arrival at Berkeley an order for his death was received from, according to Baker, the bishop of Hereford, agent of Isabella. Baker claims that this was because Isabella, having heard that Edward had arrived alive at Berkeley, pretended to the bishop that this knowledge had resulted in her

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[71] Job 1: 20-22, 'Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, / And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. / In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.'
[72] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 316, 'Edwardum deformarent, ne foret facile notus.'
[73] Ibid, 317, 'ait Edwardus: "Veletis, nolitis, habebimus pro barba aquas calidas", et ut promissum consequertur veritas, coepit profuse lacrymare.'
[74] S. Olyan, 'What do Shaving Rites Accomplish and What do they Signal in Biblical Ritual Contexts?' *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 117 (1998), 611-22 at 614.
[75] Ibid, 621.

having nightmares.[76] These, she claimed, were of Edward being restored to his former dignity and having her burned as a traitor or condemned to perpetual bondage.[77] The bishop, whose fate by this stage was constructed as being inexorably entwined with Isabella's therefore writes an ambiguous note that would ensure Edward's death but also indemnify its author against responsibility.[78] For the message could be read in two contradictory ways, depending on how the reader chose to punctuate it.[79] This fantastical plot, appropriated by Baker from earlier sources, plays an important role in the hagiography that he is constructing.[80] It exposes Isabella as the tyrant, in league with the forces of evil, securing the death of an innocent, saintly man. Isabella's purported dream has her admitting her own role as a traitor and announcing the punishments suited to her crime; in effect, through this plot device, she is made to mouth her own guilt and pronounce appropriate judgement on herself.

Following the receipt of the letter, which the gaolers interpret as an order to kill, Edward is submitted to another grotesque attempt to secure his death, one that adumbrates with the humiliations of Christ as given in 'secret passion' literature. Baker alleges that Edward was shut up in a chamber,

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[76] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 317, 'fingens sibi somnia pessima interpretatu'.

[77] Ibid, 'dignitat pristinae restitutus, ipsam tanquam proditricem igni aut servituti perpetuae damnaret.'

[78] Haines, *Church and Politics*, 109, offers a robust refutation of the claim that Adam Orleton actually wrote such a letter, 'As a matter of fact the bishop left London on 30 March [1327] and crossed to France less than a week later, not to return until about the middle of January of the following year.'

[79] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 317, The message read, 'Edwardus occidere nolite timere bonum est', which can either be understood as Do not kill Edward, fear is a good thing or To kill Edward do not fear, it is good.

[80] Haines, *Church and Politics*, 109 and n.36 points out the very similar construction used by Alberic, a thirteenth century monastic chronicler, of an ambiguously worded letter, allegedly sent by the archbishop of Esztergom to secure the death of Gertrude, queen of Andrew II of Hungary, in 1213, 'Reginam interficere nolite timere bonum est'. For a consideration of the case of Gertrude, see: J. M. Bak, 'Queens as Scapegoats in Medieval Hungary' in *Queens & Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. A. J. Duggan (Woodbridge, 1997), 223-33.

below which was a pit of rotting human carcasses, in the hope that he would die from inhaling the fumes.[81] The analogy that Baker is making in this, is to the idea that Christ was dragged into a cellar of Caiaphas' house and there plunged into a privy, where his captors 'maltreated Him so with the filth that His heart might have broken from the pain and agony he suffered from the stench'.[82] Although Baker's account places Edward above a cellar, rather than in a cellar and the stench comes from rotting carcasses rather than excrement, the core components are common to both narratives and therefore they perform the same function. In Baker's *Vita* as in the 'secret passion' accounts, this fails to kill the intended victim but does give rise to extreme suffering.

Once the gaolers realise that the enforced exposure to putrid vapours will not kill the king they resort to more direct methods, yet even in these there are echoes of 'secret passion' ideas. For Edward, according to Baker, was finally killed by the metal implement inserted through his rectum reaching beyond the intestines to burn his lungs.[83] Baker's narrative then explains that this method of execution was chosen to ensure that there was no external damage to the body for fear of detection of the crime and punishment of the perpetrators.[84] This additional explanation adds a dimension to the story that further weds this account of the death of Edward II to 'secret passion' expositions. Baker's description of what the murderers are trying to avoid, that is of their torture (tortores) producing lesions (laesione) on the external

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[81] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 318, 'Primo reclusum in camera tutissima per exhalationem cadaverum in subsolario positorum ipsum torserunt per multos dies pene usque ad suffocationem'.
[82] Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 110, from the 'Heimelike Passion'.
[83] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 318, 'tubam ductilem ad egestionis partes secretas applicatam membra spiritalia post intestinas combusserunt'.
[84] Ibid, 'caventes ne vulnere in regio corpore, ubi solent vulners requiri, per aliquem justitiae amicum reperto, sui tortores de laesione manifesta respondere, et poenam subire forent coacti.'

body, mirrors ideas from 'secret passion' narrations, where Christ was tortured with hot implements. As Marrow recounts, 'during Christ's sojourn in prison there are lengthy accounts of the application of red-hot eggshells, irons and plates to Christ's face, body and private parts, all related with a manifest penchant for sadistic detail.'[85] The notion that lay behind this torture was that Christ was the 'paschal lamb roasted on the Passover'.[86] The blisters that were said to be produced on Christ's body by these implements were then burst to become wounds, in a process described in 'brutal descriptive narrative'.[87] Baker by introducing the idea of a body covered in wounds is setting this mental image before his audience, which invites them to perceive the similarities between Christ in his suffering with external wounds and Edward with his similarly occasioned but internal wounds.

The manner of feloniously encompassing a king's death by the insertion of a hot or sharp metal implement into the rectum, as given in the Brut and reflected in the Vita et Mors, was not new. William of Malmesbury's twelfth century chronicle gives a very similar narration of the death of King Edmund Ironside in 1016.[88] Henry of Huntingdon, another twelfth century chronicler, gives a similar but more nuanced account of the same death.[89] His account explains that Edmund, a 'great and powerful king' was 'treasonably' slain a few days after agreeing to a power sharing arrangement with Canute. The

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[85] Marrow, Passion Iconography, 117.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regvm Anglorvm, ed. and trans. Mynors, Thomson, Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), i, 318-19, 'two of the king's chamberlains to whom he had entrusted his entire life' were bribed to overcome their horror of 'such a monstrous crime' and 'when the king took his seat for the requirements of nature, they drove an iron hook into his hinder parts' (eius consilio ferreum uncum ad naturae requisita sedenti in locis posterioribus adegisse). At 320-1, the chamberlains admit their 'treacherous methods' (palamque genus insidiarum professos) and were executed.

[89] The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon, ed. and trans. Thomas Forester (London, 1853), 196.

murder, according to Huntingdon, was committed by Edric, the son of an ealdorman seeking the favour of Canute. The perpetrator escapes the scene (leaving the murder weapon - a dagger - fixed in the bowels of King Edmund) and presents himself to Canute, telling him that he is now the 'sole king of England', in obvious expectation of a reward. To which Canute's replies 'For this deed I will exalt you as it merits, higher than all the nobles of England'. However, in a neat twist, that both fulfils Canute's promised reward and punishes Edric for his crime, he commands that Edric 'should be decapitated and his head placed upon a pole on the highest battlement of the tower of London.' In considering what this repeatedly re-cycled story brings to the narrative it can be seen that the story of Edmund Ironside provides the *Vita et Mors* with a valid and useful analogue. This tale transfers characteristics of the personages from the earlier story onto the cast of the current narrative. Thus, Edward II can be viewed as embodying the characteristics of Edmund (great and powerful) and Edward III, as the judge of his father's murderers, becomes the wise and noble Canute.[90]

Baker's final two sentences on the actual death of Edward II introduce the sense of an audience for and witnesses to the scene of affective piety that he is describing. According to Baker, the cries that Edward emits as he is overwhelmed by the strength of his murderers are heard both within and without the castle (intra castrum et extra).[91] At this point, the narrative introduces direct reportage of the people awoken by these death cries: 'they themselves claimed' (ipsi asseruerunt) to have been woken from their sleep by the anguished cry, recognising that this is the death cry of a person whose passage from life to death is of a violent nature.[92] They therefore are

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[90] Ibid.
[91] Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 319.
[92] Ibid, 'Clamor ille expirantis multos de Berkleya, et quosdam de castro, ut ipsi asseruerunt, ad compassionem et orationes pro sancta anima migrante monebat.'

moved to pray for the passing of this soul, which at this point is described as saintly (sancta anima).[93] By placing the descriptor of Edward's soul as saintly within the sentence that relates the perception of those who allegedly heard Edward's death screams, Baker is suggesting that this was their view rather than just his. In this, Baker is making the case for all to become aware of Edward's sanctity by engaging in the story of his imprisonment and death that he has just related, to the point where they too hear his death cry and through this recognise his sanctity. This expectation of an audience mirrors the well-rehearsed demands of affective piety where the devotee would engross himself or herself in an image or narrative to the point where they were mentally present within the action, hearing it afresh with their own ears, seeing it with their own eyes, thereby engendering a total mental response.

At a more political level the awakening of the people by the death cries of their king evokes a subtly different response which is that of national anger that their king should have been deposed and murdered while they were 'sleeping' and unaware. These two strands of reasoning are then united in the following sentence, which removes the reader from the immediacy of the death to confront directly the relationship that the death of Edward II bears in relation to that of Christ's. Baker shapes this propinquity as

> Thus, the world hated him as it hated his teacher Jesus Christ before, first the celestitude of the kingdom of Angels received the teacher who was rejected by the kingdom of the Jews then the disciple who was robbed of the kingdom of the English.[94]

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid, 'Sic hunc mundus odio habuit, sicut suum magistrum, scilicet Christum, prius odio habuit; primo praeceptorem de regno Judeorum reprobatum, deinde discipulum regno Angliae spoliatum recepit celsitudo regni angelorum.'

This sentence encapsulates the picture of the deposition and death of Edward II that Baker has constructed in his chronicle. The deposition becomes the shameful act of a nation that corresponds to the abominable perfidy of the Jews in allowing their 'king' to be executed. Edward is upheld as the disciple of Christ who, like Christ, will be welcomed directly into heaven on account of his sanctity. By this strategy, Baker silently overcomes any of the perceived difficulties, discussed in the previous chapter, that Edward's death without the last rites or final testament would otherwise have caused for the fate of his soul.

Stepping back from the matter of Baker's chronicle to consider what the provision of a hagiography contributed to the cult of Edward II, it is obvious that this piece of writing does not represent a primary attempt to evoke veneration. The date of composition makes it too late for this. The most obvious time for a cult to evolve around the memory of Edward II was shortly after the pronouncement of his death as a murder in October 1330. This idea is supported by the *Historia* of the abbey in which Edward was buried, which says that offerings in memory of Edward II were so large 'that in six years sufficient money was collected to defray the entire expense of the construction of St Andrew's aisle', where the tomb lay and which was remodelled 'after 1337'.[95] Neither can this piece of writing be connected to the Abbey of St Peter's Gloucester, where Edward II was buried, which would have been the main centre of pilgrimage and the typical locus of cult formation. Moreover, Baker does not refer in any way to the burial site. This suggests that this piece of writing although hagiographic in content differs from those that were produced by the communities which housed a saint's

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[95] Hart, *Historia*, i, lxi, from 46, 'ita quod de oblationibus ibidem oblatis infra vi. annos praelationis suae alam Sancti Andreae'; Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb*, 2.

relics and which were intended to promote pilgrimage.[96] Even more unusually for a hagiography Baker's narrative does not recount miracles attributed to the intervention of Edward II. It is unlikely that this was for lack of miracle stories around the memory of Edward II. The *Polychronicon*, a world history, completed before 1363, argues in relation to Edward II that 'neyþer offrynges ne liknes of myracles proveþ a man a seynt'.[97] As this discussion of the sanctity of Edward II forms part of the same section as his death, the assumption is that miracles and offerings were associated with Edward II shortly after his death.[98] The absence of thaumaturgic references in the *Vita* excludes another of the significant functions of hagiography from this work - that of promoting the cult centre and thereby attracting more offerings. The conclusion on this writing therefore has to be that although it is hagiographic in intent it does not participate in some of the more common functions of the genre. This may seem to rebut the argument that the *Vita et Mors* was deliberately conceived as a hagiography but although the absence of these elements may explain why the work has not previously been recognised as hagiographic it does not negate the argument on the inherent nature of the writing. Instead, it can be suggested that Baker's *Vita et Mors* is not a hagiography of substantiation but rather one of elevation, in which Edward II is being actively promoted as a saintly figure of national significance and therefore worthy of canonisation.

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[96] Thomas Head, Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orleans, 800-1200 (Cambridge, 1990), 17-19.

[97] J. R. Lumby, ed., *Monachi Cestrensis, (Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden)* viii (London, 1882), 324. Although Higden's *Polychronicon* account of the death of Edward II conforms to that of *Brut* accounts this cannot be the source for Higden's knowledge of offerings and supposed miracles as neither the *Brut* nor any other surviving contemporary source refers to such matters. This points to either oral transmission or to some form of communication that spoke of these matters that no longer survives.

[98] Higden wrote this section sometime between 1340, the date at which the account terminates and 1363, when the author died, see: John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford, 1966), 2.

The basis for this argument lies in Baker's unequivocal melding of the passions of Christ and Edward II. It has been suggested that pertinent questions to ask of saint's lives are 'what does a saint embody, to what referent outside himself does he point? What, allegorically, is he?'[99] The answer to these questions in relation to the *Vita et Mors* is almost without exception Christ. For although Baker's portrayal of Edward encompasses all the most expected traits of a saint, in that he is shown as forgiving his enemies, being steadfast in faith and exhibiting perfect charity, the overarching purpose of this account is to demonstrate that Edward's sufferings were a mirror of Christ's. Moreover, the ultimate thrust of Baker's argument is that as Edward II suffered in the same manner as Christ, in that his people too had rejected him, then he was worthy to be considered as the redeemer of England as Christ was the redeemer of the world.

Questions about the envisioned audience or the contemporary impact of the *Vita et Mors* are largely unanswerable. It is assumed that the text had a limited circulation 'since other [contemporary] historians do not appear to have used it'.[100] Barber explains that the 'difficult and stylish' Latin of the chronicle was unlikely to 'immediately appeal' to a knightly audience.[101] Therefore, he surmises, the secular clergy provided the most likely audience. However, he does also point out that although this group may have been limited in size they also comprised 'many of the senior members of the government as well as most of the king's administration' and were therefore 'highly influential'.[102] David Preest, recent translator of the work, offers a comment that may suggest a wider appeal in that he says that Baker's 'idiosyncratic Latin...seems more concerned with the cumulative power of his

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[99] Raymon Farrar, 'Structure and Function in Representative OE Saints' Lives', *Neophilologus*, 57 (1973), 83-93 at 86.
[100] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, xxvi.
[101] Ibid, xxv.
[102] Ibid, xxvi.

narrative than with clarity'.[103] This may suggest that although the Latin of the text indicates a target audience of secular clergy the power of the narrative may well have provoked the retelling of its scandalous matter to a wider audience. However, no matter how well targeted Baker's narrative may have been, his exposition of Isabella as a murderous adulteress was inimical to Edward III's claim to the French throne.

Edward III had assumed the title of king of France in January 1340, thereby challenging Philip VI, the Valois king. His right to the throne was substantiated in a 'credence', devised by English lawyers, presented to Pope Benedict XII in November 1340.[104] The 'central contention' of Edward III's case was that he 'was the nearest male heir of Charles IV', the previous king of France.[105] The argument was that Edward III, as nephew to Charles IV (his mother, Isabella, was sister to Charles IV), was related in the second degree whereas Philip VI as cousin to Charles IV was related in the third degree. Therefore, it was claimed, Edward III had a greater entitlement to the throne of France than the already anointed and crowned Philip VI did. Edward's mother, Isabella, was core to this claim: she was the crucial 'pont et planche' (bridge and board) who could not claim the throne in her own right but could transmit a claim to her son.[106]

Historians debate the degree to which this claim represented the wholehearted intent of Edward III to have his dynastic right restored, or whether this was merely leverage with which to threaten France into

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[103] Ibid, xxvii.
[104] Taylor, 'Claim to the French Throne', 158.
[105] Ibid, 159.
[106] Ibid, 160.

acquiescing to lesser demands.[107] However, Edward's reluctance to renounce his claim to the throne of France can be inferred from his treatment of the royal seals after the treaty of Bretigny of 1360, in which he agreed to desist from using the title king of France. The royal arms continued with the reversal of France and England in the quartering, giving precedence to France, a style that had been adopted in 1340.[108] The great seal, subordinate great seal and the privy seal, that had been in use since 1340, bearing the legend *rex Anglie et Francie*, were not destroyed 'as was the norm' but were stored in the treasury of the exchequer in Westminster Abbey.[109] They were then brought back into use in 1369, on the resumption of war. This indicates that although Edward III was prepared to refrain from pressing his claim to the throne of France given appropriate terms, he was not prepared to abjure it. W. M. Ormrod suggests that his 'blatant' aim was to 'secure those elements of the treaty most advantageous to his side while holding open the claim to the French throne in the hope of making still further territorial claims.'[110] Therefore, it can be argued, Edward III's dynastic claim to the French throne was fundamental to his actions in France, his mother Isabella being the vital conduit of this claim.

Had there been any serious espousal of Baker's chronicle this could, technically, have invalidated Edward III's claim to the throne of France as the text clearly reveals Isabella as the initiator of the death of Edward II. This was treason under contemporary law, which included 'the killing of the king or plotting to kill the king' and possibly 'the mere assent to such a scheme'

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[107] See: Clifford J. Rogers, 'The Anglo-French Peace Negotiations of 1354-1360 Reconsidered' in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J. S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, 2001), 193-213, *passim*; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 261-2.

[108] W. M. Ormrod, 'A Problem of Precedence: Edward III, the Double Monarchy, and the Royal Style' in *Age of Edward III*, 133-53 at 134,149.

[109] Ibid, 149.

[110] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 418.

within its definitions.[111] Isabella, in the text, is made to admit this, making it known that 'she had a real fear that her husband...might condemn herself as a traitor to the fire'.[112] Burning was the accepted punishment for a woman found guilty of treason. Yet it is the other penalty of treason that would have been the greatest threat to Edward III's claim to the throne of France - the perpetual disinheritance of the heirs of those found guilty of treason.[113] Such a ruling would have destroyed Edward III's claim at a stroke. Baker makes no allusion to such a possibility; indeed he holds Edward III in the greatest esteem and predicts that he will 'inherit both kingdoms'.[114] It is as pointless to speculate as to why Baker did not seem to be aware of this potential pitfall in his case for the canonisation of Edward II, as it is to speculate on the outcome of a fictitious case against Isabella. However, what Baker's chronicle would have undoubtedly done, had it been taken up, would have been to offer a magnificent piece of propaganda to those opposed to Edward III's claim to the French throne.

For whatever reason – patronage, personal conviction or piety - Baker crafted an account of Edward II that depicted the latter stages of his life, including his acceptance of the loss of his crown, as a model of noble virtue. He presented Edward's death as a cruel martyrdom analogous to the sufferings of Christ, sufficient to elevate him to a saintly status as redeemer of England. If Baker's intent was to engender the support of influential clerics for Edward's canonisation it was doomed to fail, if only on those practical political grounds to do with Isabella and the legitimacy of Edward III's claim

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[111] J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970), 15.
[112] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 30; Stubbs, *Chronicles*, ii, 'se timere, ne vir...ipsam tanquam proditricem igni'.
[113] Bellamy, *Law of Treason*, 9, 'the goods and chattels of a convicted traitor were to be confiscated and his heirs disinherited for ever.'
[114] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 6, 'the one who by direct line of descent from the royal blood of England and France would inherit both kingdoms.'

to the throne of France. However, the fact that it survived to re-emerge in the Tudor period is testament to 'the cumulative power of its narrative' and the compelling story it tells.[115]

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[115] Ibid, xxvii.

Chapter 5

The Tomb & the Cult of Edward II

The tomb is the traditional centre of most cults. Therefore, for an understanding of the transformation of the image of Edward II from unworthy king to saintly figure, the focus of this enquiry initially returns to the abbey church of St. Peter's Gloucester, where he was interred. This Benedictine monastery, by housing the king's tomb, became the centre and nascent locus of his memorialisation.[1] Initially his burial place was marked with an undecorated Purbeck marble slab, lying on a low-level limestone plinth.[2] The positioning of the grave between two pillars in the north ambulatory above the level of the high altar and close to where Gloucester's saintly relics were housed conveyed the prestige of its occupant but little else.[3] Sometime thereafter, a sumptuous tomb was raised above and around the original slab proclaiming the burial as one of high spiritual significance. The precise date of this enhancement is unknown but it would have been within ten years of Edward's death as when the adjacent choir and presbytery were reconstructed, transformed in style from Romanesque to Perpendicular, this remodelling incorporated a specially designed flying arch to allow for the enlarged tomb.[4]

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[1] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (London, 1981), 1, substantiates the importance of the tomb site by centring his study on the gravesite, describing the medieval Christian understanding of such locations as acting 'to join Heaven and Earth at the grave of a dead human being'. Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998), 31, describes the grave of a saint as 'the centre of his power'.

[2] Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb, passim*.

[3] Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 52, 'The thirteenth-century almeries [relic cupboards]at Gloucester in the north transept were twenty-seven feet long, eighteen feet high and three feet deep, and made of stone with broad, shallow recesses holding painted wooden cupboards.'

[4] Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb*, 2. *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England*, eds. J. Alexander and P. Binski (London, 1987), 417, 'The work was done in three distinct phases:

The resulting monument is an outstanding piece of architecture, described by Anne Morganstern as 'a remarkable example of theatrical statecraft'.[5] The original limestone base plinth was incorporated into a marble overlay, to form a niched arcade around the raised tomb chest. The recesses of the arcade, all now empty, allowed for twelve primary figures and sixteen secondary figures, probably 'weepers'.[6] On the top of the tomb chest lies a stately alabaster effigy soaring above which is a complex and highly decorated two tiered limestone canopy.[7] The resulting structure reaches 4.72 metres (fifteen feet six inches) above the pavement compared to its initial height of only 40cm (less than sixteen inches).[8] This edifice, dedicated to the memory of Edward II, has warranted many rapturous descriptions; Nigel Saul's euphoric portrayal of the canopy is evenly matched by Morganstern's emotive account of the effigy.[9] Although both these descriptions touch on the

the south transept (c.1331-6), the choir begun with the liturgical choir in the crossing under Abbot Staunton (1337-51) and continued into the presbytery under Abbot Horton (1351-77); the north transept (1368-73).'

[5] Anne McGee Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, The Low Countries, and England* (Pennsylvania, 2000), 83.

[6] A. Gardner, *Alabaster Tombs of the Pre-Reformation Period in England* (Cambridge, 1940), 17, 'weepers may be divided into three categories, angels, relatives of the deceased, and saints.'

[7] This is the first use of alabaster for an English royal effigy see: W. H. St.J. Hope, 'On the early working of alabaster in England', *The Archaeological Journal*, 61 (1904), 220-40; Blair and Ramsay, *English Medieval Industries*, 29-32.

[8] Dimensions kindly supplied by R. M. Bryant from scaled drawing, shown without scale in Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb*. See Illustration 3 at 257.

[9] Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2009), 161, 'In essence, this is a rich, yet lightly conceived, study in tabernacle architecture. High over the tomb rise two tiers of ogee arches, the upper smaller and set back, the division between them marked by the barely visible roof of the lower storey. At the top, the canopy culminates in a forest of crocketed gables and pinnacles, creating a towering ensemble of consummate beauty and delicacy. Virtually all the motifs employed in the design were in regular use in the micro-architecture of the period. Yet they were brought together at Gloucester, in a new and distinctive way to create a shrine-like monument, which could act as a focus for the cult of the murdered king'. Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs*, 83, 'Vested in tunic, dalmatic, mantle, and crown, and holding the royal scepter in his right hand and an orb in his left, the king gazes heavenward, as if transfixed by a great light. The impression of a vision is confirmed by the participation of two angels who look upward as they gently support the monarch's head, and even by the lion at his feet, which gazes somewhat

possibility that the tomb was an intentioned manifestation of Edward II's sanctity the question most frequently considered in relation to Edward II's funerary monument is who paid for the dramatic scaling of the burial site? The surviving *Historia* of the abbey (dating from the first half of the fifteenth century) alleges that the offerings, made in memory of Edward II, were so large 'that in six years sufficient money was collected to defray the entire expense of the construction of St Andrew's aisle'.[10] However, other writers, basing their views upon the opulence and magnificence of the structure consider it either entirely a royal initiative or one endorsed and financially supported by the crown.[11] Discussions of the sponsorship of the tomb have detracted from a close reading of the memorial. The enhanced structure in terms of its innovations in material and style has been commented on but this has been predominantly related to the issue of patronage and ideas of competition between the English and French dynasties rather than an analysis of what the tomb and effigy were intended to convey about Edward II or the response it sought in the beholder.[12] Moreover, the question as why it was felt necessary to transform the original slab grave into a 'shrine-like' monument and whose interests this served remains underexplored.[13]

The tomb as a whole epitomises the recognised aim of such monuments, that of engineering a positive image of the deceased that would encourage or

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soulfully in the same direction. The translucent glow of the alabaster, employed for the first time in a royal effigy in England, contributes to the effect of a transcendental event'.

[10] Julian M. Luxford, The Art and Architecture of English Benedictine Monasteries, 1300-1540 (Woodbridge, 2005), 158; Hart, Historia, i, lxi, from 46 'ita quod de oblationibus ibidem oblatis infra vi. annos praelationis suae alam Sancti Andreae'.

[11] Luxford, ibid, 158. For a summary and discussion of the arguments see: Phillips, *Edward II*, 556-60, he concludes at 558, 'It is hard to believe that an object of such subtlety and importance could have been created without both the approval and involvement of Edward III.'

[12] See for example, Luxford, *Art and Architecture*, 158-9; Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb*, passim; Saul, *Church Monuments*, 160-1.

[13] Saul, ibid, 161.

even provoke favourable memorialisation.[14] However, the question engendered by this particular monument is how much is it an appropriate tomb for a king and how much is it a shrine to a martyr?[15] It does not comply with the generally accepted form of a shrine, described as comprising steps leading up to a shrine base on which stood a reliquary, containing the remains of the saint over which a cover could be raised and lowered.[16] Moreover, as Ben Nilson points out, by the start of the thirteenth century 'without canonisation there could be no shrine'.[17] Yet visually the funerary monument of Edward II echoes aspects of shrine architecture. Moreover, it can be argued that the reconstruction of the tomb, which included a raised tomb chest, mirrored the customary translation of a saint's remains, undertaken after canonisation. The primary correspondence of Edward II's monument to a shrine comes from its height, which at fifteen feet six inches (the maximum that could be contained under the Norman arch) bears comparison to a shrine, which Nilson contends were around thirteen feet in height.[18] However, this does not include any allowance for a raised cover, exposing the reliquary chest, which is suggested by the innovative double-tiered canopy of Edward II's monument. Considering only the tomb chest and lower tier of the canopy, surrounded and delineated by limestone shafts with attached columns, a monument can be discerned that is structurally

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[14] E. V. del Alamo and C. S. Pendergast, eds., *Memory and the Medieval Tomb* (Aldershot, 2000), 1, 'human memory could be activated or manipulated through the interaction between monuments, their setting, and the visitor... Dependent on a dynamic interplay between burial site, visual cues, and liturgical ritual, memory was the guarantor of eternity for the deceased and for the community of believers.'

[15] Christopher Wilson, 'The Origins of the Perpendicular Style and its Development to circa 1360' (University of London, Unpublished, PhD thesis, 1980), 117, of the tomb 'even one so spectacularly splendid as this, was no more than the accepted form of commemoration for a dead monarch.'

[16] Nilson, Cathedral Shrines, 48.

[17] Ibid, 16.

[18] Ibid, 48, 'almost all shrine bases... were roughly eight feet tall...the reliquary above would have added three feet to the total height, and the steps below as much as two feet.'

reminiscent of the shrine of St Alban in St Alban's Abbey.[19] Viewed in this way the second tier of the canopy of Edward II's tomb induces ideas of a raised cover revealing a sacred object - the powerful effigy of Edward II.

Lawrence Stone described the carved head of this effigy as possessing 'a haunting, magical quality of romantic refinement that once seen can never be forgotten'.[20] He further commented that it is 'the illuminators' conventional representation of God transferred into stone'.[21] While this may be true it is not a feature specific to this effigy, the heads of funerary effigies of earlier monarchs such as King John at Worcester and Henry III at Westminster also demonstrate similarities to images of God or Christ in Majesty.[22] Where this effigy diverges from the established representation of an English king in death is what it holds in the left hand. Whereas previous monarchs had been shown with two sceptres the effigy of Edward II holds a sceptre in his right hand but an orb in his left, becoming as Luxford states 'the first English sepulchral effigy to do so'.[23]

Orbs were part of English royal accoutrements appearing on seals since at least the time of Henry II, but were not part of the coronation ceremony until 1377 at the earliest.[24] Orbs in the context of seals symbolise the ruler's dominion, yet, Morganstern points out that the orb, by the time that this effigy was created, had also become an attribute of both Christ and God

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[19] Ibid, frontispiece image.
[20] Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955), 161 and plate 119.
[21] Ibid.
[22] A plaster cast of Henry III's funeral effigy is held by the V&A museum London, item REPRO. A.1912-1.
[23] Luxford, *Art and* Architecture, 159.
[24] John Steane, *Archaeology of the Medieval English Monarchy* (Oxford, 1999), 22-30; Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs*, 84, n.12.

representing heaven or victory over death.[25] She concludes that the orb shown with the representation of Edward II serves 'to associate the effigy and thus the remains of Edward II with Christ.'[26] While concurring with this view, it would also seem that it is not just the introduction of the orb into a funeral effigy that suggests this; it is also implied by the manner in which the effigy holds the orb. Orbs on seals are usually seen held away from the body, resting on the hand with minimal incursion of the fingers onto the surface of the orb.[27] The orb shown on Edward II's effigy is cradled in the left hand against the side of the body, to the extent that the middle finger reaches more than two thirds of the way up the exposed surface of the orb.[28] This positioning suggests that Edward is actually holding the orb close to his heart, the seat of 'understanding, love, courage, devotion, sorrow and joy.'[29]

The lion that lies at the feet of the effigy of Edward II further suggests Edward II's close relationship with the sacred. Lions at the feet of effigies of English royals are not unknown; Richard I's effigy in Rouen has one, as do King John at Worcester and John of Eltham at Westminster.[30] These lions symbolise the might and power of the royal line. However, the lion that is portrayed at the feet of Edward II is of a different character. Whereas the other examples are quiescently subordinate to the effigy for which they

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[25] Morganstern, ibid, 84.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See: Steane, *Archaeology*, 27, Fig.11, seal of Henry II; 25, Fig.9, seal of Richard I; 23, Fig. 7, seal of Edward I.

[28] See Illustration 4 at 258.

[29] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 48.

[30] A plaster cast of the effigy of Richard I is held in the V&A museum London, item REPRO.A. 1938-23, the lion presents his back to the effigy which is shown with the right foot overlying the head of the lion and the left overlying the rump. Dart's 1723 drawing of the tomb of John of Eltham is reproduced in Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs* at 92 (photographs of the effigy in its current position and condition are shown at 93); the subordination of the lion is indicated by the effigy's surcoat overlying the lion's tail tassel and the sword overlying the right front paw of the lion. Henry III's effigy may also have shown a lion but whatever animal was made as his footrest is now missing, however the positioning of the feet demonstrates that this footrest was subordinate to the effigy.

provide a footrest, with only their line of gaze hinting at an awareness of the circumstances of their depiction, Edward II's is shown as an active participant in the presented tableaux. The lion at the feet of Edward II is a representation of the divine, which it is not on any of the other three examples.[31] This lion faces the effigy (as does that of John of Eltham) but the positioning of the feet of the effigy does not suggest domination, instead intimating mutuality. The right foot of the effigy is extended to rest securely on the lion's flank but the lion's tail, shown curled around the flank, indicates a welcome acceptance of this incursion.[32] The left foot of the effigy is un-extended and therefore appears in a natural position of repose, which happens to be comfortably resting on the lion's mane. The reciprocity of the effigy and the lion is emphasised by the left front paw of the lion, which reaches protectively onto the long gown of the recumbent figure.[33] The expression on the lion's face is that of solemn concern. The lion and Edward II both gaze upwards into the underside of the canopy formed of three, square linked vaults, which has been likened to a representation of the 'Halls of Heaven'.[34] The message conveyed through this representation is that Edward II is secure in God's grace and that the acceptance of his soul into heaven is assured.

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[31] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 21, 'Legendary natural history states that young lions are born dead, but come to life three days after birth when breathed upon by their sire. Thus the lion has become associated with the Resurrection, and is the symbol of Christ...The lion is...[also] the symbol of the Evangelist Mark because Mark in his gospel dwells most fully upon the Resurrection of Christ and proclaims with great emphasis the royal dignity of Christ.'

[32] See: Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs*, 85 for an electrotype image of the effigy.

[33] See Illustration 3 at 257.

[34] Ibid, 13, 'the upper side of the canopy is arcaded and the dowel holes here may indicate that small statues were originally placed here'. For a discussion of the evolution and diversity of representations of the halls of heaven see: Karl Lehmann, 'The Dome of Heaven', *The Art Bulletin*, 27 (1945), 1-27.

The niches cut into the northern sides of the pillars between which the tomb is sited suggests this tomb site was a place of veneration.[35] These niches, which reach a height 2.5 metres (eight feet three inches), would not have assisted in either the construction or placement of the monument and therefore fulfil some other purpose. Katherine Lack suggests that their purpose was 'to allow supplicants closer to the sanctified dust'.[36] Moreover, an offertory table added to the tomb chest in the centre of the north side, displacing two of the smaller statues, indicates the expectation of oblations at this site.[37]

Although the tomb of Edward II survives and is recognised as an artefact that suggests the existence of a cult around the memory of Edward II, other potential evidence seems to be underexplored or overlooked. One example is the matter of whether badges were produced for pilgrims visiting the tomb. Brian Spencer, a pioneering expert on the subject, described an example of a badge postulated to relate to Edward II (described as 'bust of a king in a circular frame with pearled edges') but opined that this 'might feasibly be taken to refer to some other royal saint'; the royal saint he favoured was Edward the Confessor.[38] Spencer offered very little evidence for his

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[35] See: Susan Hamilton, 'Edward II and the Abbey Transformed', in *Gloucester Cathedral: Faith, Art and Architecture: 1000 Years* (London, 2011), 26-45 at 33, Fig.28.

[36] Katherine Lack, *The Cockleshell Pilgrim* (London, 2003), 33, 'At the head and feet, large niches were carved out of the old Norman piers to allow supplicants closer to the sanctified dust.'

[37] Wilson, 'Origins of the Perpendicular Style', 119, claims that the tomb's 'central niche was blocked by a pedestal added to support the votive golden ship already mentioned'. This is an unsubstantiated but subsequently adopted assumption for no evidence is offered. See: for example, Alexander and Binski, *Age of Chivalry*, 416. Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 105, 'In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was probably common to place coins directly on the altar or shrine top...[i]n most instances, however, one or more strong boxes, or pyxes, were eventually used.'

[38] Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*, 7 (London, 1998), 183, item 201, 'The bust of a king in a circular frame with pearled edges and with close-set dot-and-circle ornament, resembling gems. D. 22mm'. Spencer, at the time of writing, was Keeper in Charge of the Medieval Collection at the Museum of London.

contention beyond noting that in 1393 Richard II 'began to have his arms associated with those of St Edward'.[39] Moreover, he offered no suggestion as to why the well-established pilgrim badges of Edward the Confessor (most commonly a crown, more rarely an openwork capital E) should be extended by the bust of an anonymous king.[40] Spencer's view has prevailed over Michael Mitchiner's earlier pronouncement that these badges related to the cult of Edward II.[41] Mitchiner who is primarily known as an expert on numismatics secured his identification of the badges in question on the close resemblance of the bust shown on the badges to the image of the king on 'Edwardian coins'.[42] Of the two arguments, Mitchiner's is more convincing, partly because the bust on the badges has clothed shoulders, which indicates it was derived from the image on coins of Edward I or Edward II, rather than Edward III.[43] This suggests an earlier production than the 1393 date implied by Spencer, which is more than sixty years after coins with this type of bust were last produced. From this it would appear that Spencer, having accepted the view that the cult of Edward II was in abeyance before Richard II's attempts to have him canonised, ruled out Edward II as the inspiration of these badges. Yet, the unchallenged association of the badges with 'Edwardian coins' undermines Spencer's argument that these badges were

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[39] Ibid, 'Edward the Confessor, along with St Edmund, was England's patron saint. As early as the spring of 1393...he [Richard II] began to have his arms associated with those of St Edward.'

[40] Michael Mitchiner, *Medieval Pilgrim & Secular Badges* (London, 1986), 181, 89.

[41] Ibid, 111.

[42] Ibid, 'There appears to be a conscious effort to make the portrait resemble that used on Edwardian coins as closely as possible: hence attribution to the monarch whose tomb was the site of contemporary pilgrimage.' Steane, *Archaeology*, 193, fig.114, follows Mitchiner in ascribing these badges to the cult of Edward II, describing an example as 'A pilgrim badge of King Edward II of Gloucester in the form of a crowned bust of Edward II, resembling the sterling bust on royal pennies. Circular openwork pin badge. From Brookes's Wharf, London.' See Illustrations 5 and 6 at 259 and 260, for a comparison of the disputed pilgrim badge with a penny of Edward II.

[43] Edward Hawkins, *The Silver Coins of England* (London, 1841), 91, 'the shoulders of Edward I and II are always clothed, those of Edward III never; and we consider this mark a sure guide for separating his coins from those of his predecessors.'

part of Richard II's promotion of Edward the Confessor as the 'founder of the royal line' as opposed to William the Conqueror, for the use of an image of a Plantagenet king does nothing to advance this idea.[44] Mitchiner details five of these badges, four found in London and one in Salisbury; Spencer, discussing the Salisbury badge says 'several other badges of this kind have been found in London' and adds that one had been found in King's Lynn.[45] Were these badges to be recognised as pilgrim tokens of Edward II then, as no two are identical, they could offer an indication of the scale of production and their spread across the country could suggest the dissemination of the veneration of Edward II. As it is, these are artefacts that Phillips, author of the most recent scholarly book on Edward II, fails to consider and denies exist.[46]

The acceptance of the availability of pilgrim badges at Gloucester would make more sense of the penitential pilgrimage ordered in 1347 by Hamo de Hethe, Archbishop of Rochester. He sentenced William Usher for his admitted crime of 'habitual fornication' (super fornicacione indurata) to make a pilgrimage to Walsingham and to Edward the king at Gloucester (vadat apud Walsingham peregre et ad Edwardum regem apud Glowcestr').[47] Usher was

[44] Brian Spencer, Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Medieval Catalogue, Part 2 (1990), 50, 'In theory such badges might be linked to one of several royal saints, not excluding Edward II, whose canonisation Richard II was, for largely political reasons, strenuously seeking to obtain in the 1390s. Earlier still however, Richard had assiduously begun to promote the cult of Edward the Confessor as well as the concept that the Confessor not William the Conqueror was founder of the royal line.'

[45] Mitchiner, Pilgrim & Secular Badges, 111; Spencer, Salisbury and South Wiltshire, 50. Most of the examples of this type of badge are in the Museum of London, where their uncertain attribution follows Spencer's determinations.

[46] Phillips, Edward II, 605, 'there is no material evidence of the kind associated with Thomas of Lancaster's cult: no pilgrim badges'.

[47] Diana Webb, Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West (London, 2001), 53; Registrum Hamonis Hethe Diocesis Roffensis, trans. and ed. Charles Johnson (Oxford, 1948), 938. This penance would have involved a journey of over four hundred miles. It would seem that Usher successfully completed his pilgrimage as when he was again brought before the Archbishop, accused of relapsing into fornication with the same woman, no mention was made of any failure to fulfil the pilgrimage, see: ibid, 952.

to bring back separate evidence from each place of his penitential visit (differat aliqua signa testimonialia de penitentia sua hujusmodi peracta de utroque loco). While this is the only known evidence of a penitent having been sent to the tomb of Edward II, it offers the impression of the tomb having become a recognised site of pilgrimage. Walsingham as one of the premier sites of pilgrimage required no further explication and neither did the visit to Gloucester.[48] This implies the expectation that William Usher will equally understand the significance of both sites. Moreover, the 'signa testimonialia de penitentia' that he is required to bring back, although understood by Diana Webb as a 'certificate of performance' is more probably a pilgrim souvenir.[49] The use of the terms 'aliqua' (any) and 'hujusmodi' (this sort of thing) to qualify the material evidence required allows for a much wider interpretation than a certificate. Furthermore, the demand for a certificate, which to offer proof of its origin would require the affixing of the seal of the establishment, would place a burden upon the place of pilgrimage. Alternatively, the purchase by the penitent of a pilgrim souvenir, specific to the place of pilgrimage, would offer reasonable proof of a visit to the designated place.

An example of the negative interpretation of evidence arises from considerations of the *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden, monk of Chester. Higden's chronicle, completed before 1364 and probably soon after 1340, can be understood as offering evidence of the idea of the sanctity of Edward II and of Gloucester having become a place of pilgrimage being widespread in England.[50] Although Higden makes it clear that he does not accept the

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[48] Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 92, 'the medieval view seems to have been that everyone knew what happened at a shrine, and therefore it needed no description.'
[49] Webb, *Pilgrims*, 53.
[50] *Polychronicon*, viii, 324, 'Sibi et sui similibus inaniter sperantium, ambitioque matrarum circumgirare affectantium rumorem talis venerationis multum amplificat et dilatat, donec aedificatio super arenam fundata decidat et labescat.' Translated by Trevisa at 325, as 'Also

right of this, by devoting his attention to vehemently dismissing the idea he indicates the scale of the matter. The picture he paints of women as disseminators and advertisers of the reputation of Edward II as a thaumaturgic figure may or may not be accurate but it reflects Higden's contemporary perception of the cult of Edward II as being widely spoken of in a positive manner (much to his annoyance). Despite Higden warning of the dangers of building upon such unsafe ground as the veneration of Edward II, seeing this as a slippery slope, his exhortation reads as a desperate plea against an accepted position rather than the casual dismissal of a transitory fad. A similar argument can be made for the account of Edward II's popular sanctity given about fifty years later in the chronicle of Meaux Abbey, Yorkshire, written by its abbot Thomas de Burton.[51] Burton's narrative of the murder of Edward II demonstrates his contemporary understanding in that he names the murderer as Thomas Gurney (and accomplices) and recounts his capture.[52] Yet, when it comes to Edward II's after death memorialisation Burton interpolates into his account several lines directly copied from Higden's *Polychronicon* before resuming his own narrative.[53] The lines that Burton repeats are those used by Higden to refute the common (vulgo) notion that Edward II was a saint of the same calibre as his cousin, Thomas of Lancaster. The argument against this view is that a man does not become

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likynge and will þat wyves have to wende about mak tydinges springe and sprede hugeliche of suche worschippynge for [to] þe buldyng uppon [suche] unsiker grounde bygnneþ to slyde.' Walker, 'Political Saints', 84, interprets this writing as a *terminus ad quem* for the cult during the reign of Edward III.

[51] Chronica Monasterii de Melsa a Fundatione Usque ad Annum 1396, Auctore Thoma de Burton Abbate. Accedit Continuato as Annum 1406, ed. E. A. Bond, 3 vols. (London 1866-8), ii, 355. D. M. Smith, The Heads of Religious Houses, III England and Wales:1377-1540 (Cambridge, 2008), 312, Thomas de Burton resigned as abbot on 14 August 1399, 'having ruled 3 yrs 5 weeks and 4 days'.

[52] *Melsa*, ibid.

[53] *Melsa*, ibid and *Polychronicon*, viii, 324, 'De cujus quidem Edwardi meritis, an inter sanctos annumerandus sit, frequens in vulgo sicut de Thoma comite Lancastriae disceptatio fuit. Sed revera nec carceris foeditas nec mortis vilitas, cum ista scleratis debeantur, nec etiam oblationum frequentia aut miraculorum simulacra, cum talia sint indifferentia, nisi corresponderet sanctimonia vitae praecedentis'.

a saint through imprisonment or villainous death and that apparent miracles or offerings are not proof of sanctity without a previously led holy life. Burton, by copying Higden's assessment of the cult of Edward II into his otherwise updated account may indicate that, despite Higden's hope that the common people would soon realise the folly of their veneration of Edward II, the cult continued to thrive. It would seem unlikely that if the many offerings (oblationum frequentia) or apparent miracles (miraculorum simulacra) had ceased by the time of Burton's writing that he would have felt it necessary to refer to them, let alone repudiate them.

Physical evidence of pilgrimage to the tomb of Edward II exists in the crosses cut into the bracket of the offertory table on the side of the tomb and the surrounding stonework.[54] Moreover, indirect evidence suggests a picture of an active cult centred on the tomb. The *Historia* makes specific reference to the large numbers of the 'faithful and devoted' visitors to Edward II's tomb, whose numbers were such that the town could hardly contain them.[55] Higden's reference to miracles and oblations also reflects a picture of the tomb of Edward II functioning as a shrine.[56] The alleged miracles of Edward II had to be recorded for them to be widely known and this required somebody at the shrine capable of writing them down.[57] These recordings would build up over time into a catalogue of miracles and the stories they contained repeated to other pilgrims.[58] In order for the oblations, referred to

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[54] Steane, *Archaeology*, 56.
[55] Hart, *Historia*, i, 46,'Tempore cujus incoepit oblatio fidelium et devotio quam habuit erga regem Edwardum in ecclesia tumulatum, ita ut infra paucos annos tanta erat plebis frequentio ut civitas Gloucestriae vix caperet multitudinem populorum ex diversis civitatibus Angliae, villis, ac vicis illuc confluentium'.
[56] *Polychronicon*, viii, 324, 'oblationum frequenta...miraculorum simulacra'.
[57] Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 92, '*miracula*, which have the advantage of often being pilgrims' own stories (as written down by the keeper of the shrine records)'.
[58] See: Andre Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 2005), 488-98, for an account of the use of miracles, which would have initially been recorded at the tomb, in the canonisation process of St Thomas Cantilupe.

by Higden and the *Historia*, to be recognised as stemming from the veneration of Edward II there needed to be a separation of this income from other offerings. The indication of such processes points to the tomb of Edward II as having considerable status as a source of revenue within the organisation of St Peter's abbey.[59] The claim of the abbey's *Historia* that within six years enough money was raised by offerings at the tomb to rebuild St Andrew's aisle, supports the contention that a separate account was kept of this revenue source.[60] Taken together, therefore, the evidence suggests that the manner of attending the tomb of Edward II was consistent with that which Nilson finds for other cathedral shrines.[61] On this basis it can be suggested that the book of miracles that Richard II sent to the pope sometime between 1390 and 1395 was not an attempt to revitalise a defunct cult but the recognition (and political exploitation) of an established veneration.[62]

Richard II initially applied to the curia for canonisation of Edward II in 1387 and his application referred to the miracles performed by virtue of Edward II.[63] This is demonstrated in the pope's reply, which was to send a bull directing the bishop of London 'to inquire into the genuineness of these

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[59] See Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 128-43, for a discussion of the staffing and organisation and revenue of shrines.

[60] Hart, *Historia*, i, 46. See: Nilson, ibid, 137-39, for other examples of income from shrines having been used to fund reconstruction of the church.

[61] Nilson, ibid, graphs at 234-41.

[62] F. Devon, *Issues at the Exchequer* (London, 1837), 259, The record of payment for 'costs incurred about the carriage and portage of a gold cup and a ring set with a ruby; also a Book of the Miracles of Edward, late King of England, whose body was buried at the town of Gloucester' is listed under 24 April 18 Richard II (1395) but the items were delivered to 'the city of Florence...to our most holy Father Pope Urban', this is Urban VI who died October 1389. N. Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven and London, 1997), 323, 'Richard [II] commissioned a book of supposed miracles performed at the king's tomb'.

[63] *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, ed. and trans. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford, 1982) 438, n.1.

miracles and to certify the true facts of the case.'[64] By this date, this was part of the normal process of investigation, known as *informatio in partibus*.[65] Richard II along with the 'archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London and other bishops, with clergy and lawyers in attendance' met in Gloucester in late 1390.[66] In this they are following a recognised process of considering which of the alleged miracles could be presented as 'truly a miracle as defined by the Church'.[67] One of the difficulties that faced the move to have Edward II canonised was the death of Pope Urban VI in October 1389; he had issued the original bull of investigation but died before the process was complete. As Andre Vauchez finds, '[a] change of pope meant a suspension which risked being definitive'.[68] Moreover, Urban VI had not been pontiff of an undivided Christendom; his election had been declared invalid and an alternate pope, Clement VII, elected at Avignon. When Clement VII died in 1394 another pope (Benedict XIII) was elected at Avignon in rivalry to Pope Boniface IX who had succeeded Urban VI. The news of the election of Boniface reached England in December 1389; however, the expected recognition from England was not immediately forthcoming.[69] Added to these complications was the increasing aversion of the papacy to recognise as saints 'those individuals, whose cult often presented obvious political aspects'.[70] Richard II's attempt to have Edward II canonised did have a strong political dimension; however this did not necessarily entail the revitalisation of his cult, but more feasibly the

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[64] Ibid, 438, 'ad inquiridem veritatem dictorum miraculorum et ad certificandum sibi quomodo rei veritas'.
[65] Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 43, and 33-84, for the history of the development of the process.
[66] *Westminster Chronicle,* 437.
[67] Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 489.
[68] Ibid, 43.
[69] M. Bennet, *Richard II and the Revolution of 1399* (Stroud, 1999), 41, argues that the recognition was withheld to gain advantage over the 'imposition of taxes by the Holy See'.
[70] Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 416.

utilization of an existing tradition.[71] Richard II continued to press for the canonization of his great-grandfather to no avail and the book of miracles that he sent to the pope has disappeared without trace.[72] Yet there is no reason to suppose that Richard II's failed campaign had an adverse effect on the veneration of Edward II. The abbey continued to prosper, as a rental survey of the houses of Gloucester in 1455 demonstrates.[73] In the early fifteenth century, the abbey built the 'New Inn', possibly to house the multitude of visitors to the tomb of Edward II, referred to in the *Historia*.[74]

The author of the rental of 1455 also refers to Edward II as a thaumaturgical figure, in a chronicle of the kings of England he appended to the rental. His narration of the life of Edward II concludes with 'his body buryed in þe Abbay of Synt Petur, wher mony mervell[es] han be sey and wrouȝt, as bokes þer and scripture bereth record'.[75] His description of the miracles being both 'said and wrought' at the tomb of Edward II adds to the picture of the tomb acting as a shrine. In reporting that miracles are 'wrought' at the tomb he is reflecting upon people going to the shrine seeking a miracle (presumably these are the sick and afflicted) and implying that there are accounts of cures at the tomb. The miracles 'said' at the tomb alludes to those having benefitted from a miraculous event, which they see as a manifestation of

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[71] Bennet, *Richard II*, 55, 'Richard's campaign for the canonization of Edward II...was no mere whim. It was part of a sustained campaign to rebuild the foundation of royal power, to renew and exalt his kingly office'.

[72] Phillips, *Edward II*, 604-5 and n.141.

[73] Stevenson, *Rental*, 115, of the total rents of Gloucester (£10 15s 7.5d), over a third (£3 16s 0.5d) went to the prior and other officers of St Peter's. See, for an analysis of the rental in relation to the abbey, John Langton, 'Late medieval Gloucester: some data from a rental of 1455', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS. 2 (1977), 259-77, at 269, 270, 275. Baker and Holt, *Urban Growth*, 277-83, analyses the land holdings of St. Peter's abbey between 1100 and 1500.

[74] Stevenson, *Rental*, 85, 'The Abbot of Saint Peter of Gloucester holds In fee a great and new inn called 'New Inn' lately built...for the great emolument and profit of the same and of their successors.' Hart, *Historia*, i, 46.

[75] Stevenson, *Rental*, 123.

Edward II's powers as an intercessor, who then come to the tomb to give thanks and tell their story. Moreover, he says that books of the miracles of Edward II were still in place in St Peter's abbey. This testimony, dating from over a century after the cult's genesis, does not cohere with the view that the veneration of Edward II was only a response to stimulus from royal interest.

The earliest surviving, dated evidence of the cult outside of Gloucester, comes in 1340, three years before Edward III made gifts to St Peter's Gloucester, which have been assumed to stimulate the cult.[76] John de Baston, a bailiff of Nottingham, petitioned Edward III for a grant of the 40 square feet of land in the weekday market of Nottingham where he had built a chapel.[77] The chapel was dedicated to John the Baptist and 'our lord the king Edward of Carnarvon, lying in Gloucester, who God absolves'. He claimed the chapel was a place where 'great miracles had long been performed by virtue of the said king'.[78] The petition continues 'And also order by letters to the prior of Lenton that one chaplain is to be able to sing in the chapel. And also let it be ordered by letters to the bishop of Carlisle and certain other bishops to examine and consecrate the chapel.'[79] The granting of his petition is presumed as it was enclosed with a writ of privy seal dated

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[76] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84, 'what distinguishes the cult...is the degree to which it was dependent on royal encouragement...in the form of the substantial gifts made by Edward III...in 1343'.

[77] Haines, *Edward II*, 237; TNA, SC 8/245/12234, W.H. Stevenson, ed. *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* (London and Nottingham, 1882), I, 130-4, in 1339 John de Baston was described as bailiff when he witnessed the foundation charter of a chantry in the church of St Mary, located in the area of the weekday market. De Baston had previously been appointed collector of the 'pontage' of the bridge of Hethebethe over the river Trent in 1335 and pardoned for the death of two 'notorious robbers' in 1338. See: *CPR*, 3 Edward III, 167, 4, 21.

[78] Haines, *Edward II*, 237; TNA, SC 8/245/12234, 'nostre seigneur le roy Edward de Karnervan, vostre piere, jesant a Gloucestre, qui Deiux assoile'.

[79] TNA commentary on SC 8/245/12234.

6 July 1340.[80] Edward III may have granted him the land, although this is by no means certain, but there is no evidence that the additional requests were enacted.[81] However, by the time of his death, before May 29 1344, de Baston had become custodian of 'of the king's meadows, mills and coney-warren pertaining to his castle of Notyngham' a lifetime, waged position that came with its own livery.[82] This may have been a reward for his recognition of the sanctity of Edward III's father or may simply have been a suitable appointment for a previous bailiff. For despite there being evidence of Edward III making grants to establishments for saying masses for his father's soul or even endowing chantry chapels that included him in their prayers, this appears to be the only possible example of him bestowing favour on the basis of a claim of the thaumaturgical powers of Edward II.[83]

Any answer to the question of why de Baston should think of building and dedicating a chapel to Edward II can only be a matter of conjecture. However, the alabaster used for the effigy of Edward II came from a Nottingham quarry and Nottingham was known as a centre of alabaster carving from the fourteenth century.[84] It may therefore be no coincidence that Peter the Mason, who in 1371 was paid 300 marks for a carved alabaster altarpiece (for the chapel of St George at Windsor) is known to have lived in St Mary's Street, Nottingham.[85] This suggests that the area of the Weekday market, where St Mary's church and de Baston's chapel were located, was a place of alabaster carving and that Peter the Mason was

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[80] Ibid, 'the privy seal warrant with which this petition was formerly enclosed dates to 6 July 1340.'

[81] *The Register of John Kirkby, Bishop of Carlisle 1332-1352 and the Register of John Ross, Bishop of Carlisle, 1325-32*, i, ed. R. L. Storey (Woodbridge, 1992). An examination of the register offers no evidence of any instruction about De Baston's chapel.

[82] *CPR*, 6 Edward III, 258.

[83] Phillips, *Edward II*, 555, n.204.

[84] Heighway and Bryant, *The Tomb*, 2; Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, (Woodbridge, 2005) 12-13.

[85] Cheetham, ibid, 13.

continuing in an established workshop tradition in the locality. Extrapolating from this it seems feasible to contend that de Baston was aware of the effigy of Edward II before it was delivered to Gloucester. The miracles that he described can then be understood as supernatural echoes from a place that once held the relics of a saint, in the form of his effigy.[86]

By dedicating the chapel to both John the Baptist and Edward II de Baston may be suggesting a connection between these two figures. A similar association also features in *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.[87] The most obvious basis for the linking of Edward II with John the Baptist is that he too could be seen as having been killed at the behest of an adulterous woman: John the Baptist by Herodias, mother of Salome and Edward II by Isabella.[88] Another similarity that strengthens the case for seeing Edward II as comparable to John the Baptist lies in the account of the Baptist being imprisoned for rebuking Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great) for his adulterous affair with Herodias.[89] This situation is reflected in the case of Edward II, who was imprisoned after, though not as a direct consequence of, rebuking his wife for her affair with Roger Mortimer.[90]

Some fifteenth century material evidence indicates the acceptance of Edward II as a saint, despite the lack of official canonisation, much in the manner of

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[86] S. Wilson, ed., *Saints and their Cults* (Cambridge, 1983), 4, Relics – 'substances or objects which had been placed on or near the tomb...[t]hese relics were regarded as extensions of the saint's body and shared its sacred quality.'

[87] *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*, ed. F. J. Furnivall (London, 1878), the date of the first dream is given as 'þe wedenysday bifore þe decollacioun of seint Ion'.

[88] Mark 6: 17-29.

[89] Mark 6:18, 'For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife'.

[90] Edward II indicated his disapproval of the relationship between Isabella and Mortimer in a letter to his son of 18 March 1326, which 'accused Isabella of openly and notoriously keeping Mortimer in her company and of associating with him "within and without house"', Phillips, *Edward II*, 489.

Edward the martyr, an earlier murdered king.[91] A surviving chronicle roll produced in Tewkesbury *c.*1420 shows an image of the king, labelled '*sanctus edwardus*', which suggests that his sanctity has become a commonplace matter that required no explication or justification.[92] Moreover, it would seem that by the mid fifteenth century Edward II had become a saint with his own recognised symbol, the burning spit with which he was allegedly killed. This can be seen in a copy of Higden's *Polychronicon*, where, alongside the passage describing his death and subsequent reputation for miracles, an illustration of a 'spit, glowing red' has been added.[93] In Strensham church, Worcestershire, also dedicated to John the Baptist, a late fifteenth century painted wooden panel, once part of a rood screen, shows Edward II holding a spit, in a series of images including Christ, the apostles and other martyr saints, who are only identifiable from their accoutrements.[94] Luxford unequivocally recognises this panel as an image of Edward II but this is not universally accepted.[95] However, the alternative suggestions of St Erasmus and St Edward the martyr can be ruled out as both would be very atypical representations. St Erasmus (St Elmo) was a bishop, not a king yet the image in Strensham church is of a crowned and nimbed figure. Moreover, St Erasmus' attribute is a windlass with his entrails

[91] Christine Fell, *Edward, King and Martyr*, (Leeds, 1971).

[92] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84; Bodl. L. Ms Lat. Misc. b 2 (R). Mary Saaler, *Edward II* (London, 1997), 148, points to a manuscript chronicle of the kings of England (Brutus – Henry IV), dating from the second half of the 15th century (BL Cotton Tiberius E VIII, 7v-15v). She translates the entry for Edward II as '1307: On the 30th day of January at Westminster was crowned Edward of Caernarvon, he was murdered in Berkeley Castle and was buried at Gloucester, where many miracles occur every year.'

[93] Julian Luxford, 'The Late Medieval Abbey: Patronage, Buildings and Images', in *The Medieval Art, Architecture and History of Bristol Cathedral*, eds. J. Cannon & B. Williamson (Woodbridge, 2011), 216-46 at 231, Eton College, MS 213 (fol.236v).

[94] Luxford, ibid.

[95] The guide, *Church of St John the Baptist*, (The Churches Conservation Trust, 2010), 8, offers 'St Erasmus (patron saint of sailors) with spit or windlass'. 'Proceedings of the Annual Spring Meeting at Bredon, Strensham and Pershore', *Trans. B&G*, 24 (1904), 1-14 at 10, describes the image as 'a king with ermine collar and cuffs, sceptre and a weapon like a spit, perhaps St Edward the martyr'.

wrapped around it, not a bare spit.[96] Edward the martyr was a king (d.978) but his accoutrements follow the story of his *passio* and show him variously with a cup, a dagger, a sceptre and a falcon.[97] The floor tiles of Strensham church, also dating from the late fifteenth century, may offer some indirect support to the idea of this image representing Edward II in that they include (among others) the arms of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, the Berkeley family and John the Baptist.[98] While tiles that reflect the saintly patronage of the church are perhaps to be expected, there seems no particular reason to have either the Berkeley family or St Peter's represented. However, given the earlier suggestion of a mental association between Edward II and John the Baptist, it can be suggested that he was more likely to be represented in a church dedicated to the Baptist and the inclusion of tiles bearing the arms of his burial site and his jailor (and suspected accomplice to the murder) supports this contention.[99] At Strensham we may have an example of Edward II's sanctity having become an accepted tradition and another example is possibly found in late fifteenth century roof bosses in the north transept of St Augustine's abbey, Bristol (now Bristol cathedral).

Here there are two roof bosses potentially of Edward II; one boss is of a naked contorted man wearing a crown, and the other another naked contorted king pointing at his anus. In 1935, C. J. P. Cave thought it 'probable that these two figures are intended for Edward II in his death agony'; a decade later he wrote 'I have no hesitation in ascribing these to

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[96] See: http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/hempstead, the church of St Andrew, Hempstead, Norfolk, which has a late fourteenth century panel painting of St Erasmus, showing his bishop's mitre and his entrails, wound around the windlass.

[97] Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 44-50. Lindley, 'The Figure-Sculpture of Prince Arthur's Chapel', 149, of a sculpture 'King Edward of the West Saxons with a dagger in his breast and holding a sceptre in his right hand',

[98] *Church of St John*, 7; 'Proceedings', 9.

[99] Phillips, *Edward II*, 573, 'On 20 January 1331 a jury of twelve knights appeared before the king in parliament and declared that Thomas de Berkeley was not guilty of any part in Edward's murder'.

Edward II in his death agony'.[100] Between Cave's two publications, one of the bosses (the one pointing towards its anus) was painted, changing its appearance from a naked king into one wearing a jaunty green and gold coat, thereby rendering the detail inscrutable.[101] The only publicly known image of this boss before it was painted was a grainy, indistinct reproduction in Cave's second publication.[102] M. Q. Smith, a self-declared 'iconoclast', writing in 1979, dismissed the attribution of the bosses as 'popular tradition'.[103] He devoted nearly two pages to discrediting the 'legends' of Edward II and detailing the 'facts'.[104] The nub of his argument was that it was 'less than likely that the abbey and its Berkeley patrons should choose to commemorate, nearly two hundred years after the event, the murder of a king while in captivity at Berkeley castle.'[105] He therefore described the two bosses as 'A contorted naked king' and 'A contorted clothed king'.[106] His doubt has since influenced some subsequent writing.[107] Despite this, Luxford, in 2011, considering only one of the bosses, because of the overpainting of the other, which he describes as 'a naked king looking over his shoulder and drawing his left leg back to expose his anus', finds it 'perfectly possible' that it is a representation of Edward II.[108] He supports his argument by the location of the boss next to a passion shield, the lance of which is 'pointing

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[100] C. J. P. Cave, *The Roof Bosses of Bristol Cathedral* (Bristol, 1935), 13. Cave, *Roof Bosses in Medieval Churches* (Cambridge, 1948), 53, 'Of kings perhaps the most curious are two in the north transept of Bristol Cathedral; one is completely naked except for his crown, the other partially so; I have no hesitation in ascribing these to Edward II in his death agony; in one boss the king is actually pointing with his finger to the exact spot where was inserted the red-hot iron that killed him.'
[101] M. Q. Smith, *The Roof Bosses and Vaults of Bristol Cathedral* (Bristol, 1979), 13, n.17, relates that the repainting was reported in the *Times* 8 November 1937.
[102] Cave, *Roof Bosses* (1948), plate 29.
[103] Smith, *Roof Bosses*, 24, 25.
[104] Ibid, 25.
[105] Ibid, 26.
[106] Ibid, 32, plate X, bosses 12 and 13.
[107] Piroyansky, *Martyrs*, 100, 'if indeed the roof boss...is really a posthumous depiction of the king'
[108] Luxford, 'Late Medieval Abbey', 231.

towards the exposed fundament', which he says allies the boss to 'themes of martyrdom and sanctity'.[109] He also suggests that Smith did not 'acknowledge the very late survival of devotional interest in Edward [II] in the diocese of Worcester, nor the range of mainstream historical reference to the murder.'[110] Therefore, Luxford allows that the boss 'suggested to historically and devotionally aware viewers the most notorious of all local murders, perpetrated, as the monuments and heraldry of the abbey served to recall, in Berkeley Castle.'[111]

The painted over boss can now be introduced into this argument, as although the image of this before painting was very imperfectly reproduced in Cave's book the original plates, now in the keeping of English Heritage, are of excellent quality and allow for a very detailed inspection.[112] A close examination of these photographs, reinforced by Luxford's opinion of one of the bosses, indicates that is 'perfectly possible' that both the bosses are representations of Edward II. The one that remains unpainted shows the king accepting his martyrdom, as Christ accepted his crucifixion, signified by his holding of his own leg, in a position that allowed the penetration of the murder weapon.[113] The now painted boss can be understood as portraying Edward II after his martyrdom, symbolised by the double crown he is wearing, and pointing back to his anus in a visual reminder of the manner of his martyrdom.[114] This leaves the question as to why these bosses were placed in St Augustine's abbey, founded and patronised by the Berkeley

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[109] Ibid, 232.
[110] Ibid, 231.
[111] Ibid, 232.
[112] See Illustrations 7 and 8 at 261 and 262.
[113] E. H. Kantorowicz, 'Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought', *The American Historical Review*, 56 (1951), 472-92 at 472, 'the martyr gives himself up to his executioners without resistance'.
[114] The martyr's crown is also known as the crown of life. James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love him.'

family and one of the places that was said to have refused to accept the body of Edward II for fear of Isabella and Mortimer.[115] Smith's assertion that these roof bosses would have been selected by the Berkeley family and therefore do not represent Edward II does not take into account that they ceased being active patrons of St Augustine's in 1368, when the last family burial occurred, although they had used it as their family mausoleum until that date.[116] However, the inference that lies behind Smith's reference to the Berkeley family, which is that the Berkeley family would not welcome a reminder of the murder of Edward II, probably remains valid. Nevertheless, with the cessation of patronage of the abbey, their influence would have been reduced if not negated and it can be argued that the abbey no longer had cause to protect their interests. Yet, these bosses cannot be seen as pointing at the person who would seem to be the most likely target of criticism, Thomas de Berkeley (3rd Baron Berkeley), Edward II's jailor. For not only had he been exonerated of any involvement in the murder he was not buried in St Augustine's.[117] Moreover, the placement of the bosses, in the north transept, a prominent public space, with shallow vaulting (meaning that the bosses are clearly visible from the ground) is on the opposite side of the church to the Berkeley chapel, where the majority of the Berkeley memorials are to be found.[118] Those who would have been exposed to these roof bosses were those participating in the public rituals mentioned by Luxford and lay people attending mass in the Elder Lady Chapel.[119] Notably, entry to the Elder Lady Chapel is only gained by passing through the north

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[115] Hart, *Historia*, i, 44, 'ob terrorem Rogeri de Mortuomari et Isabellae reginae'.

[116] Smith, *Roof Bosses*, 25. Jon Cannon, 'Berkeley Patronage and the 14th Century Choir', in *Art, Architecture and History of Bristol Cathedral*, 148-85 at 149-55.

[117] Phillips, *Edward II*, 572, 576. Haines, *Edward II*, 466, n.21, 'Berkeley's fine alabaster effigy (he died in 1361) lies on his tomb in the south aisle of Berkeley church'.

[118] Luxford, 'Medieval Abbey', 230, 'Each transept also had a particular status. The south, with access to the dormitory and cloister, was the exclusive domain of the canons and their servants, while the north was a site of public ritual'.

[119] Ibid, 'it was also used by the lay people who we know attended masses in the eastern Lady Chapel.'

transept, under the roof bosses being discussed here. In the Elder Lady Chapel lies the tomb of Lady Margaret Mortimer (1308-1337), eldest daughter of Roger Mortimer, condemned for the murder of the king and it is this tomb that is possibly the key to understanding the message of the roof bosses.[120]

Margaret Mortimer was the first wife of Thomas de Berkeley (Edward's jailer) and she lies alongside their son Maurice de Berkeley, who died in 1368.[121] Maurice was the last of the Berkeley family to be buried in St Augustine's Abbey. Maurice's son, Thomas (5th Baron Berkeley), died in 1417, leaving only a daughter as his heir. This rendered the title extinct and plunged the family into a protracted inheritance dispute, culminating in the Battle of Nibley of 1470, the 'last private battle fought on English soil'.[122] The roof bosses may celebrate this 'crisis of succession'.[123] The argument that they can be seen to present is that the Berkeley family has been visited by divine retribution in return for their union with the Mortimer family and that from such a union only disaster can result. The central roof boss of the north transept, which is of 'two mermaids holding a large crown between them', supports this interpretation.[124] Mermaids were the heraldic symbol of the Berkeley family, appearing on the seal of Thomas Berkeley, jailer of Edward II and husband of Margaret Mortimer.[125] His grandson, another Thomas Berkeley, had 'a crest with mermaid supporters' on one of the three

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[120] Canon, 'Berkeley Patronage', 172, 'on a double tomb chest in the eastern arch of the Elder Lady Chapel, is a female effigy, a very elegant carving of around the fourth decade of the 14th century. She wears a wimple and has little pet toy dogs at her feet.'
[121] Smyth, *Lives of the Berkeley's*, i, 345, 377. The inscription reads 'This tomb was erected to the memory of Maurice Lord Berkeley ninth baron Berkeley who died 8th day June 1368. & Also of the Lady Margaret his mother, daughter of Roger Mortimer Earl of March & first wife of Thomas Lord Berkeley She died the 5th day of May 1337.'
[122] B. Smith, 'Late Medieval Ireland and the English Connection: Waterford and Bristol ca.1360-1460', *Journal of British Studies*, 50 (2011), 546-65 at 560-2.
[123] Canon, 'Berkeley Patronage', 155.
[124] Cave, *Roof Bosses*, 10.
[125] Smyth, *Lives of the Berkeley's*, i, 356-7.

illuminated pages of a glossed psalter that he commissioned and his tomb brass portrays him wearing a mermaid collar.[126] It therefore can be suggested that these bosses far from reminding only the 'historically and devotionally aware' of the murder of Edward II represent a view of Edward II as a martyr, exulting in the downfall of his enemies, as is given in Exodus.[127] Moreover, these roof bosses may also echo the belief discussed in relation to the *Vita et Mors* that the death of the perpetrators (or their descendants) precipitated the canonisation of the victim.

A mid fifteenth century painted glass representation of Edward II, still found in All Souls College, Oxford seems to have suffered from later doubts about the posthumous memory of Edward II. Richard Symonds who described the series of glass 'between December 1643 and April 1644' noted the inscription as 'Edwardus Martir'.[128] Despite this Thomas Hearne (1678-1735), a noted antiquary, decided that the image was of Edward III and promulgated this idea through his writings.[129] This misunderstanding remained uncorrected until 1870-71 when the windows were repaired and the image was correctly re-identified as Edward II. However, the inscription was not returned to the original 'Edwardus Martir' but renewed as 'Edwardus II Rex'.

The latest known representation of Edward II as a martyr also seems to be treated with a touch of scepticism. This is found as a carved stone figure in Worcester cathedral on the southern exterior elevation of the chantry chapel of Prince Arthur (elder brother of Henry VIII) who died in 1502. This

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[126] Ralph Hanna, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and his Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 878-916 at 883-5.

[127] Luxford, 'Medieval Abbey', 232. Exodus 20:5 'Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the father's upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.'

[128] F. E. Hutchinson, *Medieval Glass at All Souls College* (London, 1949), 13, 38.

[129] Ibid, 53, citing D. W. Rannie, ed, 'Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne, Vol.xiii (23rd September 1722 - 9th August 1725)', *Oxford Historical Society*, 1907, 222.

elevation is divided into five tiers, each containing six sculpted figures. The figure in question is in the third tier, which is populated by royal martyrs, both from before and after the Norman Conquest. The figure is crowned (though the crown has suffered considerable damage) and holds a spit in its left hand and a crowned orb in its right. Phillip Lindley acknowledges, in his textual account, that the figure is 'probably Edward II'.[130] In the schema of the elevation, the figure is described as 'king (Edward II?) with orb and spit' and the photograph of the image is given the inscription 'Damaged figure of King Edward II (?)'.[131] This leaves the impression that the attribution is far from certain, yet Lindley offers no alternative understanding of the figure. This may be because the revered figures most easily taken for Edward II, St Elmo or Erasmus and the Anglo-Saxon martyr King Edward are also represented on the walls of the chapel.[132] Lindley's retrospective assessment of the acceptance of Edward II as a martyr-king seems to reflect the difficult intellectual position of today. The figure on Prince Arthur's chapel is in all likelihood Edward II, if only by process of elimination, but the idea appears resisted, possibly because this does not fit with the currently accepted understanding of a brief and fitful cult.

This exploration of the potential material evidence of the cult of Edward II suggests that there is sufficient surviving material to warrant a reconsideration of the medieval perception of the posthumous reputation of Edward II. Artefacts found or produced in Chester, Meaux, Salisbury, King's Lynn, London and Rochester as well as Gloucester and Bristol may testify to a much wider spread of this belief than has previously been recognised. The date range of the presented evidence, spanning from 1340-1502 questions

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[130] Lindley, 'Worcester and Westminster', 149.
[131] Ibid, 145, 150.
[132] Ibid, 149, 'At the west end...King Edward of the West Saxons', at 145, south elevation, fourth tier, 'St Erasmus holding windlass on which his bowels are wound'.

current understandings of the cult as short-lived, instead it points to the recognition of Edward II as a martyred king having become an orthodoxy by the eve of the Reformation. The primary motivators of the cult were in all probability the abbey of St Peter's and the town of Gloucester as they were the main beneficiaries.[133] The precise strategies by which they promoted the cult cannot now be distinguished but it would be unusual for them not to have exploited this opportunity, making their endeavours a significant factor.[134] The politics of the rule of Edward III in pursuing a claim to the throne of France, a claim made through his mother, disbarred him from rendering any substantial support for the cult. For, in the minds of many, as evidenced in the *Fieschi Letter* and the *Vita et Mors*, his mother was deeply implicated in the murder and protecting her reputation was of more political benefit than acknowledging his father as a martyr. Richard II, by associating himself with the cult of Edward II, may have been reminding his people of the sacral nature of kingship, as Michael Bennett suggests, '[i]t was part of a sustained campaign to rebuild the foundations of royal power, to renew and exalt his kingly office'.[135]

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[133] Langton, 'Late Medieval Gloucester', 272, notes that Gloucester 'was mainly populated by craftsmen who served the day-to-day needs of the surrounding region, the local ecclesiastical population, and each other'. In his conclusion, at 275, he finds that the evidence from the 1455 rental suggests that Gloucester 'does not accord with the orthodox interpretation of urban change [decline] in late medieval England' based upon the 'new building and accumulation of and investment in real estate by the laity and the church.'

[134] B. Abou-el-haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formation and Transformations* (Cambridge, 1994), 1, 'we can distinguish two audiences: the locals under the jurisdiction of the shrine, who bore an undetermined portion of construction costs, but who are generally thought to have benefitted from the pilgrimage trade, and the pilgrim visitors who freely came, deposited their coins, and experienced liturgy as spectacle.' At 17, 'did the audience generate the cults, as the clergy claimed, or did the cults, enshrined in luxury art and orchestrated by the clergy, produce the audience?'

[135] M. Bennett, *Richard II and the Revolution of 1399* (Stroud, 1999), 55.

Chapter 6

Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II

This chapter reconsiders a poem which although recognised as being centred on Edward II retains much of its mystery. This is possibly because the dating implied within the poem does not reflect its actual date, leading to a misperception of the circumstances in which it was created, which in turn constrains interpretation. Therefore, three possible dates of conception or adaption will be reviewed and explored, to see which, if any, resonates with the matter and tone of this piece. The first date to be considered is 1307-8, as is implied in the poem's dating clauses. The two subsequent dates are premised on the poem being a *post mortem* construction and have been selected as potential dates because the poem alludes to a 'pilerinage' or crusade and these are dates where the idea of the English embarking on a crusade was either a reality or sincere intent. The first of these occurs early in the reign of Edward III, in the aftermath of the announcement of the death of Edward II as murder. The second is some fifty years later, in the reign of Richard II.

This poem, which has no known circulation, survives in a single, untitled copy, in a roughly written, late fourteenth century (c.1380-1400) miscellany now in the Bodleian Library.[1] It is comprised of one hundred and sixty six lines of Middle English rhyming couplets plus a non rhymed final half line which re-iterates the much vaunted veracity of the work – 'ffor it is sooþ'.[2] It claims to be a recounting of five dreams that the self-proclaimed author, Adam Davy, had on different nights, over a little more than a year, relating to Edward II. This text can make no authorative claim to originality. Although the extant

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[1] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laudian misc. 622.
[2] L.167

copy is in Middle English this may be a translation of an earlier work. Its current form may be the result of augmentation or adaption of a previous version. Moreover given that the poem was framed within dreams adds considerably to the fluidity of interpretations that can be laid against the piece.[3] The miscellany in which it is found consists of nine tracts of varying lengths, eight of which are united by a common devotional theme, the apparent exception being *Adam Davy's Dreams*.[4] The *Dreams*, along with items two, six, eight and nine from the miscellany, were edited and published in 1878 by F. J. Furnivall, who titled the poem *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*.[5]

Adam Davy's first dream is set at Westminster, where two knights subject the crowned Edward to an attack. Despite being well armed, he offers no resistance and emerges physically unscathed. After the knights have gone, streams of red and white light emit from Edward's ears, spreading (as far as the author can see) throughout the country. In his second dream, the writer sees Edward riding an ass, clothed in grey, heading towards Rome as a pilgrim. In the third dream, the poet witnesses Edward being received by a pope and crowned, which the author says, '...bitokneþ he shal be / Emperour in cristianete'.[6] The fourth dream does not show Edward at all; it consists of a dialogue between Christ and his mother. Christ asks his mother's leave to

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[3] Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, London (2004), 49-56.
[4] In chronological order the miscellany contains: 1.*The Siege of Jerusalem*, 2.*The life of St. Alexius*, 3.*Adam Davy's 5 Dreams about Edward II*, 4.*The Geste of Alisaunder*, 5. *The Pilgrimages of the Holy Land*, 6. *Bible History of Joseph (King Solomon's Book of Wisdom)*, 7. *Fifteen Tokens of St. Jerome*, 8. *Lamentacio Animarum*, 9.*The Battle of Jerusalem*.
[5] Furnivall, *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams*. His edition, although it adds elaborate punctuation, including many exclamation marks, does not distort the meaning. All the contractions in the original text are expanded in his edition but these are signalled by the use of italics, and none is disputed. Furnivall's edition presents the text in a single column, whereas the original is double columned, but the line layout is true to the manuscript. (All quotations will be from this edition unless otherwise stated.)
[6] L.81-2.

'conueye' Edward on a 'pilerinage'.[7] His mother accedes to this request as Edward has served her 'boþe day & ni3th'.[8] The fifth and final dream has Edward, clothed all in red, delivered to stand before the high altar of Canterbury by an angel, who seems to bear the stigmata.

Previous understandings of this poem are that the first dream shows either Edward II's coronation or his knighting.[9] The second dream foresees Edward II as making a pilgrimage to Rome, the third his being crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the pope and then in the fourth dream going on crusade.[10] This interpretation fits with the allied notion of the poem being a political prophecy, written early in the reign of Edward II. This rests on the assumption that, as Edward II did not go on crusade and was not crowned Holy Roman Emperor, this piece had to be composed when such ideas still had the potential to be realised. This interpretation found further confirmation in a 1926 article by O. F. Emerson.[11] He was responding to a challenge to his 1905 assertion that the poem was composed 'probably soon after the accession of the king'.[12] Emerson, working from the dating clause attached to each dream (respectively given as; 'þe wedenysday bifore þe decollacioun of seint Ion', 'a tiwes-ni3th Bifore the fest of alle halewen', 'þe wedenysday...Next þe day of seint lucie', 'worþing-ni3th' and 'þursday next þe beryng of oure lefdy'), secured, with the use of an almanac, the dates in the poem to the years 1307 and 1308. From this work, he concluded 'that Adam Davy's *Dreams* were of

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[7] L.101-03.
[8] L.106.
[9] Coote, *Prophecy*, 85; Phillips, *Edward II*, 20.
[10] Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911), 95, 'The predictions which seem so highly improbable are that Edward should become Holy Roman Emperor, and that he should make a successful crusade'; V. J. Scattergood, 'Adam Davy's Dreams and Edward II', *Archiv fur das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 206 (1969-70), 253-60 at 255, explains the understanding of 'pilerinage' as crusade as 'the crusade was originally conceived as a pilgrimage under arms to the Sepulture of Christ'.
[11] Emerson, 'The Date', 187-9.
[12] O. F. Emerson, *A Middle English Reader* (New York, 1905), 314. The challenge was contained in Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, 95.

1307-8 and that he committed them to writing in the latter part of the latter year'.[13] Most subsequent writers have accepted these conclusions on the dating of the poem, but Haines notes that the internal dating 'may be no more than a device to give verisimilitude to what he has to say. The actual composition could have taken place at some other time.'[14]

Emerson also offered the apparently obvious purpose of the poem; in 1905, he stated that this 'was doubtless to obtain the favour of the king'.[15] This view continues to have currency, as no other purpose has been discerned. Thus David Matthews, in his recent discussion of the poem, says it 'is indeed a bid for favour'.[16] Therefore, this poem has come to be understood as a representation of the vainglorious hopes of the nation, engendered by the succession of the new king.[17]

Yet this is an uneasy understanding; for Matthews it leaves the poem elusively stranded in its own 'obscure imagery'.[18] Moreover there are issues raised in the text, that point away from this being a prophetic text, conceived and written in 1307-1308 and more to it being a deliberately ambiguous *ex eventu* prophesy, written after the death of Edward II.[19] In the first dream, where two knights attack the king, although suggestions have been made as to who the knights represent, there has been no explanation offered as to why

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[13] Emerson, 'The Date', 189.

[14] See: for example, Coote, *Prophecy*, 84, n.2, 'Adam Davy's Dreams have been convincingly dated to the years 1307-8'; Scattergood, 'Adam Davy', 260, 'it would seem that Adam Davy's Dreams were composed in 1307-8'; Matthews, *Writing*, 97, 'Davy's poem was also surely an early production, given Edward's failure to fulfil any of the hopes it expresses'; Haines, *Edward II*, 30.

[15] Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 314.

[16] Matthews, *Writing*, 96.

[17] A Latin poem of praise marking the accession of Edward II was scratched out and replaced with the *Lament* in BL Royal MS 20 A II f.10.

[18] Ibid, 14.

[19] Coote, *Prophecy*, 94, 'political prophesy was usually written *ex eventu*, as a reaction to events and policies', 31 '[p]olitical prophecy is very vague about time, whilst appearing to be very precise.'

Edward II, who is described as 'armed wel, boþe wiþ yrne & wiþ stel' fails to respond to an open attack in a sacred place.[20] Edward, in this scene, is portrayed more as stoic than warrior. In the second dream, when Edward is riding as a pilgrim to Rome, the poem's author describes that 'his shankes semeden al blood rede', an allusion that he feels no need to explain.[21] Yet, the suggestion of blood red shanks seems an unlikely descriptor of Edward II before the most notorious version of his death was known.

Turning to the idea that the poem is predicting that Edward II would be crowned Holy Roman Emperor, Furnivall glosses both the references to this matter as 'Emperor of Christendom', whereas the text reads, 'Emperour ychosen he worþe of cristianete' and 'Emperour in cristianete' respectively.[22] The two terms that are common, both to the glosses and the text, are Emperor and Christianity. From this, it is not entirely clear whether Furnivall himself considered his term 'Emperor of Christendom' as analogous with the Holy Roman Emperor. Emerson, writing in 1905, implies that this was his understanding in saying 'that Edward should be "emperor in Cristendom" could hardly have been expected long after his troublous reign began.'[23] Rupert Taylor, writing in 1911, treats the idea as an accepted fact.[24] He supports this with reference to Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III, who was elected as Holy Roman Emperor, 'by one faction of the Electorate'.[25] Taylor also refers to the portrayal, in the third dream, of the pope crowning Edward II, papal crowning being one of the most distinctive features of the

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[20] L.7-8. Scattergood, 'Adam Davy', 254, suggests that these figures are 'military enemies – most likely the Scots (though conceivably the French)' and that the lack of harm they do infers that Edward will be victorious over them; Matthews, *Writing*, 95, proposes that they 'perhaps represent Scotland and France', and that the lack of wounds is explained as an image of the nation's 'inviolate body' represented through the king

[21] L.63.

[22] L.48, L.82.

[23] Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 314.

[24] Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, 93.

[25] Ibid, 95.

role of Holy Roman Emperor. His position seems the obvious interpretation of the matter, if the poem is viewed as having been composed in 1307-1308. Yet, following Haines' suggestion that the text could have been composed at any time subsequent to 1308, and reading this dream as a *post-mortem* construction, this papal crowning also makes sense as the pope bestowing the 'crown of heaven', the accolade of martyrs, on Edward II.[26]

Placing the construction of this poem, in its current form, after the death of Edward II also allows the difficult and often ignored fifth and final dream of the poem to be accommodated.[27] For this dream shows Edward II as a recognised martyr, 'ycloþed al in rede', which is at odds with the alleged date of composition of 1307-1308.[28] Coote, in recognition of this difficulty, conjectured that the fifth dream might have been added after the death of Edward II.[29] Piroyansky follows her in this notion.[30] Coote concludes by suggesting that Edward II being clothed in red is an echo of Edward I's burial in his coronation robes of red, but this cannot explain why this dream is set in Canterbury, which was not, at that time, a place of royal burial or where Edward I was buried.[31] Scattergood, of the fifth dream says, 'the significance of the dream is obscure'.[32]

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[26] Haines, *Edward II*, 30.
[27] Ibid, 88-9, Coote seems the only writer to attempt to interpret this dream; Mathews, *Writing*, 95, only says '[f]inally Adam dreams he sees Edward before the high altar of Canterbury Cathedral'; Scattergood, 'Adam Davy', 255, although suggesting a possible link to the rewards of a crusade, determined that it lacked 'sufficiently distinctive' detail for the ceremony to be identified.
[28] L.140. Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 152, 'Red is the Church's colour for martyred saints'.
[29] Coote, *Prophecy*, 89.
[30] Piroyansky, *Martyrs*, 102.
[31] Coote, *Prophecy*, 89.
[32] Scattergood, 'Adam Davy', 254-56.

An underpinning metaphorical strand in this poem, touched upon by both Scattergood and Coote, may help to elucidate the fifth dream.[33] This is the apocalyptically prophetic text of the 'Last Roman Emperor'.[34] The central theme of this prophesy is that a king will arise, at a time known only to God, who by surrendering his crown will engender an apocalypse that results in the destruction of an Anti-Christ.[35] By the thirteenth century, the empire to which this prophesy referred came to be accepted as not just the Roman Empire but as the Christian empire.[36] This prophesy, although an unlikely choice for a newly crowned king, fits very well as a *post-mortem* imagining of Edward II as the spiritual figurehead of the crusade suggested in the fourth dream. Even though the text of the poem is sufficiently ambiguous to serve both interpretations, showing Edward II as either Holy Roman Emperor or Last Roman Emperor, the vital requirement for the Last Roman Emperor, the voluntary renunciation of his crown, might also be regarded as providing additional support for the interpretation of the first dream; as the abdication of Edward II. This understanding of the poem, as an echo of the Last Roman Emperor prophesy, would then allow the fifth dream to be understood as picturing the confirmation of Edward II as a saint, following the successful outcome of a crusade.

Moreover, the association of a posthumously victorious Edward II with Becket's tomb resonates with the matter of the 'Holy Oil of Thomas a Becket'.

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[33] Coote, *Prophecy*, 87; Scattergood, ibid, 255.
[34] Scattergood, ibid, 255; Coote, ibid, 90.
[35] Coote, ibid, 44-50, She describes this prophesy as common to two, separately arising, collections of texts, the Sibille generaliter and Pseudo-Methodius. She further states that this prophesy was known in Europe from the seventh century. For an account of the evolution and dissemination of the prophesy of the 'Last Roman Emperor', along with a detailed analysis of the variations between the Sibille generaliter and Pseudo-Methodius traditions, see: P. J. Alexander, 'The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and Its Messianic Origin', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 41 (1978), 1-15.
[36] Coote, ibid, 46, 'This is then contextualised in the form of an empire based on religion, in this case Christianity.'

For, sometime between 1317 and 1319, Edward II had approached Pope John XXII with a request to be anointed, for a second time, with the 'Holy Oil of Thomas a Becket'. The legend was that the 'Holy Oil' had been given to Thomas a Becket, while he was in exile, by the Virgin Mary and that this oil should be used to anoint the fifth king after the one currently ruling (Henry II). This made Edward II the chosen recipient for the oil, of which it was said,

> Truly, it is a future king who will be anointed with
> this oil, who will recover the lands lost by his
> ancestors, that is, Normandy and Aquitaine,
> without force. This king will be the greatest
> among kings and it is he who will win back many
> churches in the Holy Land and will drive all the
> pagans out of Babylon and he will cause many
> holy churches to be built there.[37]

The request was denied by the pope in 1319, his letter specifically stating 'we altogether refuse to allow any prelate whatever to be charged to confer the unction on you'.[38] The author of the poem in placing the triumphant Edward II before the tomb of Thomas Becket may be suggesting that he will fulfil the prophecy of the 'Holy Oil', despite lacking his anointment with it.

Understanding this poem as a pro religious crusade piece explains its inclusion within the miscellany within which it is found, for as Lesley A. Coote points out '[t]he texts in the manuscript are concerned with theology and the Crusade'.[39] Support for the case of understanding this poem as an *ex eventu* prophesy also comes from the dating clauses. The religious festival, given in each dating

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[37] Coote, ibid, 94-5. See, further: J. R. S. Phillips, 'Edward II and the prophets' in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod, (Woodbridge, 1986), 189-201; T. A. Sandquist, 'The Holy Oil of St. Thomas of Canterbury', in *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, eds. T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke, (Toronto, 1969), 330-44; W. Ullman, 'Thomas Becket's Miraculous Oil', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 8 (1957), 129-33.
[38] Leopold G. Wickham Legg, ed. *English Coronation Records* (London, 1901), 72.
[39] Coote, *Prophecy*, 90.

clause, when considered in a *post mortem* reading of the dreams, provides a coherent lens through which to interpret the dreams.[40] These, when read in this manner, show the deposition in dream one; moulded into a Christ like act of personal self-sacrifice. In dream two, Edward's martyred soul travels to Rome. In dream three, he receives the 'Crown of Heaven', as a recognised martyr, from the pope. Dream four shows Christ and the Virgin Mary endorsing his undertaking of a crusade. Finally, in dream five, Edward II emerges posthumously victorious as the 'Last Roman Emperor' having fulfilled the prophesy of the 'Holy Oil' of Thomas a Becket.

Reading the dreams in this manner also overcomes the perceived difficulties with the suggested motivation of the poem, to gain the favour of Edward II. Haines considers this purpose 'difficult or impossible to establish'; for Adam Davy, despite recording heavenly direction to tell the king of his dreams, fails to do so.[41] Furthermore, Adam Davy, despite giving biographical details such as that he is the Marshal of Stratford-at-Bow and twice saying how well known he is, remains unidentifiable.[42] As Coote says, his is the anonymous voice of an 'everyman' speaking to 'everyone', not a real person seeking the favour of a live king.[43] Reading this work as promoting a crusade endeavour endorses these insights. Rather than the poem having been written to gain the favour of Edward II early in his reign, it can be suggested that his posthumous

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[40] For a contemporary understanding of the allusions, cast by the festivals in the dating clauses, the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine has been selected, as a widely available contemporary source, dated to about 1260, of which over one thousand manuscripts have survived. However, it has to be accepted that this is only one of the possible informative sources and that the contemporary audience would have had a much greater inherent understanding of these festivals than a modern audience would. All quotations and citations of this work will be from: Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: readings on the saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols. (New Jersey, 1995), hereafter referred to as *The Golden Legend*.

[41] Haines, *Edward II*, 30.

[42] L.113, L.164. When Furnivall published the text of the dreams it was thought that Adam Davy had been identified, this assumption was later proved false, see: Taylor, *Prophesy*, 96-8.

[43] Coote, *Prophesy*, 90.

reputation as a martyr was being harnessed as a spiritual figurehead for a crusade, sometime after 1330.

Edward III's crusade ambitions reached a peak in the 1330's against a political background where the establishment of Jerusalem under Christian rule was the commonly voiced and often sincere intent of many Christian kings. The papacy encouraged kings to take the cross, arguing that 'crusader kings earned their crowns in perpetuity, to be king-saints among the heavenly host.'[44] As Timothy Guard argues, '[c]hivalric society's attachment to the concept of royal power as an instrument of holy war was deep.'[45] Edward I was the last king of England to actually go on crusade and it was said that his crusading intent so permeated and subsumed his life that his deathbed desire was that his 'heart should be taken to the Holy Land and that his executors should pay the wages of a hundred knights for a year on crusade.'[46] His crusade ambitions were, on his death, laid onto his son. As one lament pleads, 'May it please God in Trinity that your son may effect conquest of Jerusalem the noble city and pass into the Holy Land.'[47] Even before his father's funeral Edward II was receiving letters from foreign powers that sought his support for crusading ventures. To which he replied that while unable to accede to such requests immediately (owing to the costs of his marriage and his forthcoming coronation) 'with the Lord's favour he would soon be in the east.'[48] Edward II took the cross and made 'crusading vows' on 6 June 1313, at Notre Dame in Paris, alongside Philip IV, his father in law.[49] His wife, Isabella took the cross three days later and to commemorate this occasion her

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[44] Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade* (Woodbridge, 2013), 187, derived from letters of Clement VI, pope 1342-52.
[45] Ibid, 183.
[46] Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 35.
[47] Guard, *Chivalry*, 184, quoting Thomas Wright, *Political Songs of England: from the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. Peter Cross (Cambridge, 1996), 250.
[48] Guard, ibid, 186.
[49] Phillips, *Edward II*, 210.

father commissioned an 'elaborately illuminated text of the apocalypse' to be presented to her.[50] One of the illustrations reflects the association between crusade and apocalypse that can be read into the last of Adam Davy's dreams. This shows a French monarch and an English prince leading other rulers who have come together to face the foe at the battle of Armageddon.[51] The enemy in this illustration, based upon the pouring of the sixth vial in the book of Revelation, are 'the dragon, beast, and false prophet'.[52] Edward II did not fulfil his crusade ambition. Yet, the strong association between monarchs and crusading when allied with his murder, if understood as a martyrdom, may have rendered him a suitable figurehead for his son's crusade intents. The choice of a figurehead was significant, for, to be successful, it had to both embody the values of the cause and be readily identifiable to would be supporters, as a uniting and rallying icon. It can be argued that Edward II, soon after his death was announced as a murder, became such a figure. The conquest of the Holy Land was something he had vowed in life and when endowed with the additional spiritual power of a martyr was something he could be perceived as achieving posthumously.

In 1330 some of Edward III's Gascon vassals had allied themselves to Philip VI of France's planned crusade against the Moors in southern Spain; in 1331 the intention became that Edward would personally take part in the campaign.[53] Later in the same year this idea was overshadowed by the prospect of a joint English and French crusade to the Holy Land, proposed for March 1334. Parliament met in March 1332, summoned because 'the king of France had declared his intention to travel to the Holy Land in March two years hence, and that it would please him greatly if the king of England could

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[50] Ibid, 211.
[51] Ibid, 212.
[52] Rev. 16: 12-14; S. Lewis, 'The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS. Fr. 13096', *The Art Bulletin*, 72 (1990), 224-60 at 226.
[53] Guard, *Chivalry*, 51; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 181.

accompany him on this journey'.[54] This proposal gained the support of parliament with the caveat that rather than March 1334 'he should undertake his journey at the Purification [2 February] next following in three years time', which still allowed the crusade to meet 'the official deadline for embarkation of July 1336'.[55]

However sincere Edward III's crusading intentions were, they were complicated and inhibited by pressing political matters regarding Scotland and France. Edward III supported Edward Balliol as king of Scotland whereas France supported David II, son of Robert Bruce and brother in law of Edward III. By 1333 English preconditions had been attached to the proposed crusade to the Holy Land; these were the return of lands confiscated by France in 1324-7 and that France should not 'make capital out of their alliance with the supporters of David Bruce in Scotland'.[56] These were unacceptable to France. The English parliament of September 1334 acknowledged that because of the complications of the situations in both France and Scotland the king would not be able to undertake any campaign to the Holy Land for another five years.[57] The proposed crusade did not eventuate, Benedict XXII officially cancelled the project in March 1336, but it was only with the outbreak of war with France in 1337 that the notion of Edward III would soon undertake a crusade receded. Therefore, for at least five years, after the announcement of the murder of Edward II, there was anticipation that Edward III would undertake a crusade to the Holy Land. This anticipation, melded with the cultural shock of the murder of an anointed king, may well have inspired

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[54] Seymour Phillips, ed. 'Edward III: Parliament of March 1332, Text and Translations', item 5, *PROME*, accessed 10 September 2013.

[55] Ibid, item 9, an editorial note adds that 'it is not clear how to interpret this date' as it could be understood as either 1335 or 1336; Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades 1095-1588* (Chicago, 1988), 249.

[56] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 182.

[57] Ibid, 183.

the production or adaptation of *Adam Davy's Dreams*, when feelings about both events ran high.

This was also a period (1320-40) when, according to Coote, 'political prophesies flourished'.[58] She finds that '[o]n the whole, political prophesy's optimism, its exaltation of the king as hero and its tendency to rationalize political crises after the event meant that it posed no threat to the reigning monarch; in fact it was positively favourable.'[59] Adam Davy's Dreams can be read as reflecting a similar attitude to that which Coote finds in other political prophesies of the time. The king as hero, which is certainly how he is portrayed, may be dead but he is also the father of the current king, who uncovered his murder and punished the perpetrators. Therefore, the glory of a successful crusade and the resulting sanctification of Edward II, predicted in the poem, can be understood as reflecting positively onto both father and son. The political crisis occasioned by the deposition and murder of Edward II are rationalised as providing a conduit to the enhanced spiritual authority of the former king, which can then be adopted by the nation for its greater glory. Moreover, this poem can be seen as adopting a similar positioning to that presented in the *Lament* where the figure of Edward II demonstrates spiritual support for his son.[60] In the case of *Adam Davy's Dreams* the suggested support moves from beseeching the help of 'Jesus, son of Mary' to a situation in which both the Virgin and Christ are shown as actively endorsing the endeavour because of Edward II's piety.[61]

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[58] Coote, *Prophecy*, 92.
[59] Ibid.
[60] L.87-9, 'Jhesu luy garde, le fiz Marie / De treson qe Dieu confund / Deux confund ses enemys' (Jesus, son of Mary, preserve him from treason, which God confound. May God confound his enemies).
[61] *Lament*, L.87, *Dreams*, L.101-10.

As well as the sermons of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Winchester, made at parliament in 1332, praising Edward III's intended crusade, it is known that model sermons, aimed at promoting crusade, were actively circulating in the Winchester diocese during this period.[62] Such exemplary models, according to Christoph Maier, could be adapted by a preacher to suit the particular circumstances of a given situation 'by developing the themes, arguments and particular rhetoric that he personally deemed appropriate'.[63] It is possible to speculate that, like the exempla sermons, *Adam Davy's Dreams* may have been adapted to respond to the planned crusade intentions of Edward III.

Yet some of the details of the text are difficult to reconcile with a proposed crusade in the 1330's. Three apparent obstacles to this interpretation present themselves. The pope was not in Rome at this time and there was no immediate prospect of his return there. There is no obvious political timescale for the kind of crusading activity that seems implied in the poem and the 1330's seems very soon after the announcement of Edward's death as murder for the reading of Edward II presented in this writing to emerge.

In dream three Edward II meets with the pope at Rome but the papacy had re-moved itself from Rome in 1305 and was not to return until 1378. While it can be argued that the intention was always to return to Rome, once the political situation in Italy was more favourable, would this notion have been projected into a poem in support of a crusade initially sponsored by John XXII and after his death by Benedict XII? Moreover, within the temporal mapping of the poem the meeting in Rome precedes the crusade and therefore does not seem to be a suggested outcome of a successful crusade.

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[62] Guard, *Chivalry*, 148.
[63] C. T. Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology* (Cambridge, 2004), 30.

John XXII's ambitions for a return of the papacy to Italy were practically limited by factional wars to a brief window between 1332 and 1334 but it was not Rome that was the immediate destination but Bologna.[64] Bologna had at this point 'yielded to the church' and in a country 'incessantly laid waste by war' was briefly thought to be a bridgehead, which after Lombardy and Tuscany were pacified may have ultimately allowed the pope to return to Rome.[65] John XXII died in December 1334, without realising his ambition of a return to Italy and was buried at Avignon. Moreover, there was strong resistance from the French to any move away from Avignon. When Jacques Fournier was elected as Benedict XII in December 1334 there was talk that he had only been elected because a more favoured candidate had refused to promise not to return the Holy See to Italy.[66] Despite this Benedict XII, in July 1335, 'with the unanimous consent of his cardinals' planned to move to Bologna in October of the same year.[67] This intention was rapidly postponed owing to 'the plans for the crusade', the hardship of undertaking such a journey (crossing the Alps) and the need to settle other urgent matters.[68] Moreover, an investigation into the situation 'gave ample evidence that sedition at Bologna was still causing too much unrest to justify the transfer of the Holy See within its walls.'[69] Bologna soon rebelled, which, according to G. Mollat, 'made it impossible for the Holy See to return to Italy'.[70] Benedict XII,

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[64] See: G. Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon 1305-1378* (London, 1963), 76-110, for an account of the politics of the papacy and Italy under John XXII. Ibid, 100, c. 1332 'John XXII protested...that only stern necessity had prevented the fulfilment of his openly declared intention to transfer to that city [Bologna]: he was detained in Avignon by the organisation of the crusade'.
[65] Ibid, xx.
[66] Ibid, 26, n.1.
[67] Ibid, xxi.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, 109.

seemingly in acceptance of the situation in Italy, ordered the construction of the papal palace at Avignon during the 1330's.

Although the talk of crusade permeated the 1330's, as C. J. Tyerman finds, 'the courts of Europe hummed with crusade diplomacy, rhetoric and gossip', no definite plan or agreed timescale for embarking upon the venture emerged.[71] Yet Adam Davy's Dreams seems to express a sense of immediate prescribed intent. In the non-dream narrative between dreams 4 and 5, the reader is prompted to follow Adam Davy's lead and travel swiftly ('swiþe') to the East to find (and presumably join) the spirit of Edward II in a divinely approved crusade.[72] The suggested destination for those who choose to accept Adam Davy's urgings appears, within the narrative of the poem, to be Rome. This section of the poem, in comparison to the five dreams, has a less specific date 'On Wedenysday in clene leinte'.[73] The notion of cleanness as a metaphor for Lent may also be suggested in the final piece of non-dream narrative that follows the apocalyptic scene of the fifth dream. Here Adam Davy addresses the recognised dangers of the enterprise (death), which is to be accepted with forbearance ('þolemodenesse') and the rewards (the bliss of heaven).[74] These lines model the desired response to the poem; the listener should, like Adam Davy, accept the promise of heavenly bliss and join the venture. However the following couplet can, possibly intentionally, be read in two ways: 'And lete vs neuere þerof mysse, / þat we ne moten þider wende in clennesse!'[75] This at one level can be understood as exhorting all would be crusaders to embark upon the endeavour in a state of spiritual purity but at

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[71] C. J. Tyerman, 'Philip VI and the Recovery of the Holy Land', EHR, 100 (1985), 25-52 at 25.
[72] L.125-8, 'fforþ ich went swiþe onon, / Estward as me þou3th ich mi3th gon: / þe li3th of heuene me com to, / As ich in my waye shulde go.
[73] L.117.
[74] L.155-8, 'Lorde, my body is to 3oure wille / þei3 3ee willeþ me þerfore spille / Ich it wil tak in þolemodenesse / Als god graunte vs heuene blisse'
[75] L.159-60.

another level can be read as a directive to set off in Lent. This within the chronological and geographical structure of the narrative seems to describe a venture that is to be embarked upon in Lent, to gather at Rome in expectation of victorious campaign that can be celebrated in England, by September 8 the following year, the date of the fifth dream. At parliament the suggested date for crusade was 2 February (Purification) in either 1335 or 36; in neither of these years did this date fall within Lent. However, the original proposal was for a departure in March 1334, which does encompass Lent (Easter day 27 March). This suggests a possible window of opportunity for the production of this poem between the original mooting of a joint crusade to the Holy Land in the autumn of 1331 and the parliament of March 1332.[76] Furthermore, this timing coincides with papal plans for a removal to Bologna with the ultimate aim of a return to Rome.[77] Mollat suggests that it was this intention that spurred the poet Petrarch to compose a sonnet, *Vedra Bologna, e poi la nobil Roma* (See Bologna, and then the noble Rome).[78] If he is correct then this would indicate that the notion of the return of the papacy to Rome was contemporaneously regarded as plausible and possibly imminent.

From this, it is possible to conjecture that the extant version of *Adam Davy's Dreams* was produced in the expectation of a return of the papacy to Rome before the departure on crusade in March 1334. Even the seemingly anachronistic portrayal of the pope in Rome garbed in grey, in the third dream, can be accommodated as the pope in mourning for Edward II.[79] There had been no solemn exequies performed in the presence of the pope on the

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[76] See: Ormrod, *Edward III*, 179-83; Tyerman, 'Recovery of the Holy Land', 28, 'On 5 December 1331, at the request of the French, Pope John XXII instructed the French episcopate to preach the cross throughout the kingdom, to collect donations and to institute special weekly masses to be sung on behalf of the crusade.'

[77] Mollat, *Popes at Avignon*, xxi, 'an order even reached Rome itself for the pontifical dwellings to be restored and the gardens cultivated afresh.'

[78] Ibid, 100.

[79] L.77, 'Hure gray was her cloþing'.

death of Edward II, as there had been for Edward I and were to be for Edward III.[80] Perhaps by presenting the pope in the colour of 'mourning and humility' the author is suggesting that this omission could be symbolically rectified by the recognition of Edward II as a martyr.[81] Alternatively, this could be an additional pointer towards the idea of this crusade taking place during Lent, for the colour grey 'is sometimes used as the Lenten color. Because gray symbolizes the death of the body and the immortality of the spirit'.[82]

This perception of the poem shifts but does not negate previous understandings of it as a bid for favour of the king, but the king it is seeking the favour of, in this view, is not Edward II but his son. This leads to the question of whether a poem presenting his father as a martyr would have gained the favour of Edward III. The argument has already been made about the *Vita et Mors* that this would not have found royal favour because of the overt criticism of Isabella in the pivotal role she was portrayed as having played in the murder. The same argument cannot be made for *Adam Davy's Dreams*. The two knights who attack Edward II in the first dream are not identified and as male characters cannot be taken as a representation of Isabella. The murder itself is only alluded to tangentially, as a stepping-stone towards spiritual glory. Moreover the fundamental reason for the protection of Isabella's reputation, as the source of Edward III's claim to the throne of France, might, in the 1330s, have appeared to have been somewhat mitigated; by the prospect of a joint crusade and a proposed marriage between the future Black Prince and the daughter of Philip VI.[83]

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[80] Ullman, 'Curial Exequies', 26.
[81] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 151.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 180.

Yet, the picture of Edward II presented in the poem seems unusually restrained for a composition or adaptation produced shortly after the announcement of his murder. This narrative differs from the brutal, degrading physicality of Baker's *Vita* to picture the king as a mythologised and idealised figure. The sense of distance between the audience and the events, which they are called to witness, is heightened by the framing of the individual scenes within dreams. This summons notions of heavenly or otherworldly visions, which not only adds a sense of privileged access to the account but also effects a separation from the immediacy of them. The demanding emotional engagement of affective piety called for by Baker's *Vita* is replaced with a narrative style that evokes dispassionate, calm reverence, without rancour or guilt. Moreover, this narrative strips its matter, in relation to Edward II, of any political positioning; it is devoid of accusation, pity, blame, explanation, anger or pain. This elevates his story to an unalloyed account of a national hero, who is presented as available to and worthy of worship by all. The five dreams form a series of *tableaux vivants* that move from reminding why Edward II warrants veneration to foretell of papal recognition of his sanctity, to anticipate that after his sanctity is officially endorsed his divine support will secure a significant spiritual triumph for his people. In this poem, Edward II is portrayed as rightfully canonised and as the spiritual conduit through which God will deliver a great victory for the English nation. This seems to be a perspective unlikely to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the announcement of his murder, amidst the competing narratives of how this had been encompassed.[84] However, it equally has to be allowed that the figure of Edward II presented in *Adam Davy's Dreams* is not that dissimilar to that of the *Lament*. Yet, if the reference to Edward II's blood red shanks in line 63 is an allusion to his murder by impalement, as seems likely, then this

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[84] See: Mortimer, 'Reconsideration', 58-60, for an analysis of contemporary sources on the manner of the death of Edward II.

is possibly the earliest known reference to it.[85] It seems somewhat improbable that such an allusory mention would resonate with an audience in the 1330's when the manner of Edward II's death was still a matter of conjecture and before the story of impalement had become the dominant narrative.[86] This point is illustrated by reference to the *Lament*, which in this interpretation can be regarded as a near contemporary production. The *Lament*, of the death, only says 'May the agony which my body endures' but through the analogy of Edward to Boethius suggests strangulation.[87]

Turning now to consider the points of coincidence afforded by the circumstances of a later crusade, during the reign of Richard II; these may be no more than happenstance but may also indicate a re-working or even the initial prompt for the poem. This crusade was called for by a pope residing in Rome and initially the rallying point was to be Rome. It was supported by parliament and prompted a national campaign for funds and recruits. Collectors for this crusade benefitted financially by being allowed to retain a percentage of monies collected and this may provide a credible purpose for the poem. The crusade set off from the port of Sandwich, a place that is due East of 'stretford-atte-bowe' from where a heavenly voice tells Adam Davy to travel 'Estward'.[88] The date of embarkation was May but the campaigning for the crusade was heightened during Lent and this may be why Adam Davy makes references to 'clene lente' as the time that 'ich in my waye shulde

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[85] Ibid, The analysis finds the earliest reference to a 'Red-hot copper rod' in a *Brut*, which the author dates as 'after 1333'.

[86] Ibid, Mortimer's 'Principal Accounts which mention the Death of Edward II, 1327-1400' includes some that allude to a 'Red-hot copper rod' or derivations from this theme but also includes 'grief-induced illness', 'Murdered, possibly strangled' and 'vilement murdriz', as well as the less specific, such as - 'died in what manner was not known' or 'either by a natural death or the violence of others'.

[87] *Lament*, L.23.

[88] L.113, 126.

go'.[89] The intention was for a crusade lasting a year, which also fits with the overall timescale alluded to in the poem. The spiritual rewards offered for participation in this crusade were a prominent feature of the recruitment process and this too appears reflected in the poem. Moreover, although there were plans for the enterprise to be led by Richard II, it was ultimately led by Henry Despenser, grandson of Hugh Despenser the younger, who may have had a personal inclination to promote the idea of Edward II as a saint.[90]

The crusade, here under discussion, took place against the background of the Great Schism. The papacy had returned to Rome in 1377, under Gregory XI. This restoration was compromised in the following year when, following the death of Gregory XI, the election of Urban VI in Rome was declared invalid and Clement VII was elected as pontiff at Avignon.[91] This was the start of the Great Schism. Perhaps significantly it was at a parliament in Gloucester, in October 1378, in the abbey were Edward II was buried, that the decision was promulgated that England would support Urban VI of Rome as the true pope and promoting active measures against anyone attempting to procure

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[89] L.117, 128.

[90] The family of Henry Despenser had suffered under the regime of Mortimer and Isabella but were restored after the coup of October 1330. His grandmother, Eleanor de Clare, was given royal permission to collect her husband's bones and have them buried in Tewkesbury Abbey in December 1330. In September 1331 Hugh, the eldest son of Hugh the younger, was pardoned and released from custody. This was followed in 1338 with the restoration of the title when Hugh, uncle to Henry Despenser, became 2nd Baron Le Despenser. The idea of Richard II as leading the venture was in abeyance by the parliament of February 1383, see: C. Given-Wilson, ed. 'Richard II: Parliament of February 1383, Text and Translation', Introduction: 'Richard planned to go abroad in person to raise the siege [of Calais], succour his allies, and recover the crown of France; item 9, 'the expedition [Despenser's crusade] would be better conducted by him [Richard II] than any other person in the world. But since that could not be done..'. PROME, accessed 15 September 2013.

[91] The Avignon papacy was a matter of concern to the English as all the Avignon popes and a very high proportion of the cardinals were French and therefore regarded as puppets of the French king. This tension was notably heightened during the hostilities of the Hundred Years' War. See: W. Ullman, The Origins of the Great Schism (USA, 1967); Y. Renouard, The Avignon Papacy 1305-1403, trans. D. Bethell (London, 1970); Mollat, Popes at Avignon.

benefices for adherents of the Avignon papacy.[92] This action added to the difficulties of the relationship between England and France, for the French recognised Clement VII of Avignon, as did Scotland.

As part of the campaign mounted by Urban VI to re-establish his position and defeat the rival Avignon papacy he called for a crusade. To this end he issued a bull - *Nuper cum Vinea* - on 6 November 1378, which was 'published in England the following spring'.[93] This bull 'was a condemnation of the schismatics and a request to all the faithful to go to Rome to crusade in Italy in the papal cause'.[94] In May 1379, the archbishop of Canterbury ordered that the bull should be brought 'to the notice of all the faithful'.[95] This call to arms did not excite a nationally supported response, which Christopher Tyerman puts down to the lack of appeal this proposal held for the government.[96] He finds that English ambassadors 'tried to persuade the pope to specify France, Spain (i.e., Castille), and Scotland as the targets for such an enterprise'. A further bull of March 1381, *Dudum cum vinea Dei*, addressed to Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, ordered that 'the bishop was to appeal to the country for a crusade against the schismatics in order to destroy the Clementine pretensions for ever'.[97] This bull was supplemented by two further bulls - *Dudum cum filii Belial* (issued 25 March 1381) and *Dignum censemus* (issued 15 May 1382). The contemporary chronicler, Walsingham, describes that

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[92] See: Geoffrey Martin (ed), 'Richard II: Parliament of October 1378, Texts and Translation', item 78, *PROME*, accessed 15 September 2013.
[93] Margaret Aston, 'The Impeachment of Bishop Despenser', *BIHR*, 98 (1965), 127-48 at 132.
[94] A. P. R. Coulborn, 'The economic and political preliminaries of the crusade of 1383', (Thesis summary) *BIHR*, 10 (1932), 40-44 at 42.
[95] See: A. K. McHardy, *The Church in London 1375-1392* (London, 1977), 600, item 607, which records the receipt of this order.
[96] Tyerman, *Crusades*, 334.
[97] Ullman, *Great Schism*, 114-20; Tyerman, ibid, 'As early as 1379 bulls of Urban VI for a general crusade against the Clementists were circulating in England.'

> As these bulls bestowed great power upon him,
> the bishop had them read out in parliament and
> had copies widely circulated and ordered them to
> be fixed to the doors of churches and the
> gateways of monasteries so that everybody might
> see them.[98]

The publication of the bulls took place in September 1382, along with a vociferous 'mandate' from bishop Despenser ordering that each parish should produce a list of parishioners and their contribution recorded alongside, with the confessional being used to remonstrate with 'both the rich and the poor' who 'put off payment'.[99] Integral to this call for support was the spiritual reward offered in return, which was emphasised both in the bulls themselves and in Despenser's accompanying mandate. Walsingham records this as an 'absolution' offered in return for support of the crusade,

> we grant you full remission of your sins, and we
> bestow upon you all the privileges granted to
> those setting out to the help of the Holy Land, and
> we give you a share in the help afforded by the
> prayers and benefits of the holy, universal synod
> and the holy, Catholic church.[100]

This absolution was offered to all 'who labour in this fight for one year' or 'who would at least send money to the troops according to their abilities and means'.[101]

It was only after this, during the parliament of October 1382, that the commons made it clear that they preferred bishop Despenser's proposal for a crusade against the French in Flanders to that proposed by John of Gaunt in

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[98] *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376-1422*, trans. David Preest, editorial matter James G. Clark (Woodbridge, 2005), 188; ibid, 191, details the 'great power' conferred onto bishop Despenser.
[99] Ibid, 192.
[100] Ibid, 193.
[101] Ibid, 191.

Castile (the way of Portugal).[102] This, it seems, was because Despenser's crusade served two purposes, both as a campaign of the Hundred Years War (aiming to secure England's significant economic interests in Flanders) and to restore a singular Rome based papacy. On 6 December 1382, permission was granted for Despenser to start recruiting for his crusade.[103] The crusade gained wide support; Walsingham, in his chronicle, reported 'And so, by the will of God, the hearts were so universally fired with devotion, that in such a widespread land almost nobody was found who did not either offer himself for this crusade or make a contribution from his resources'.[104] Norman Housley explains this 'surge of enthusiasm' as stemming from the 'dual character' of this crusade as '[n]ever before had English men and women been able to gain release from Purgatory by contributing money to a cause of religious significance and direct, indeed critical, national importance.'[105] Collectors for this crusade were legitimately allowed to keep 6d in the pound from all they received, as an incentive to maximise their efforts.[106] However, such a large and profitable venture also attracted the unscrupulous; in March 1383 an order was given 'to arrest and imprison certain persons who...falsely represent themselves to be proctors of Henry, bishop of Norwich, collect money for a crusade and apply it to their own uses.'[107]

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[102] See: Aston, 'Impeachment' 134-7 for a summary of the economic and political background of both proposals and the parliamentary response.

[103] Chris Given-Wilson (ed.), 'Richard II, Parliament of February 1383, Text and Translation', *PROME*, accessed 30 September, 2013.

[104] *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, trans. David Preest, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge, 2005), 197.

[105] Norman Housley, 'The Bishop of Norwich's Crusade, May 1383', *History* Today, 33 (1983), 15-20 at 18.

[106] Ibid, 'As an incentive to work hard [on the recruitment process], the friars who acted as preachers and confessors could keep 6d of each pound they collected.'

[107] Tyerman, *Crusades*, 335; *CPR*, Richard II, ii, 261.

The crusaders were to muster at Sandwich on 27 April 1383, four weeks after Easter, which that year fell on 22 March.[108] Ash Wednesday, 4 February, marked the beginning of Lent and it was in February that Despenser 'stepped up' his campaigning efforts 'by insisting that the laity be continually reminded of the indulgences in pulpit and confessional until they gave money'.[109] Walsingham records that the effect of the offer of these indulgences on the people was epiphanic.[110] He also suggests that it was the reiteration of the indulgences that spurred the men to fight, knowing that 'all those, whose lot it was to depart this life on this field, would become martyrs.'[111] The emphasis on the spiritual rewards of participation in this crusade, whether by active service or donation, is particular to this crusade and the poem seems to echo this.[112]

The date of the fifth dream can also be interpreted as gesturing towards the political circumstances of Despenser's crusade. This dream takes place on a Thursday 'next þe beryng of our lefdy' – the feast of the nativity of the Virgin Mary – 8 September.[113] This is the first day of an octave instituted in the Virgin's honour, by Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254), in fulfilment of a promise made to her in return for her aid in a difficult papal election.[114] The

[108] Tyerman, ibid, 336.

[109] Housley, 'Crusade', 18.

[110] Chronica Maiora, 197, 'And so when the people throughout the whole land heard that such a sweet boon had come to the English, they had no wish to throw away this powerful means of grace...but were fired with a burning devotion to the faith.'

[111] Ibid, 199.

[112] L.133-4, 'I ne reiche what ʒee myd my body do, / Als wisselich Iesus of heuene my soule vndergo'; L.155-8, 'Lorde, my body is to ʒoure wille; / þeiʒ ʒee willeþ me þerfore spille, / Ich it wil tak in þolemodenesse, / Als god graunte vs heuene blisse'.

[113] L.135.

[114] The Golden Legend, ii, 154, 'After the death of Pope Gregory [1227-1241], the Romans locked all the cardinals in a conclave so that they would elect a successor more quickly. However, when they had not reached an agreement after several weeks, and had to endure many abuses inflicted by the Romans. They made a vow to the queen of heaven that if by her intercession they agreed on a choice and would be free to go home, they would decree that the long-neglected octave of her birthday should be celebrated from then on.'

circumstances of this papal election, as given in *The Golden Legend*, are strongly echoed in the account of the election of Urban VI, put forward by those that sought to repudiate it.[115] Both accounts refer to hostile crowds of Romans, the difficulty in making the decision and the desire of the cardinals to return home. However, the earlier election difficulties were resolved appropriately, by seeking divine support, not by nullifying the election and appointing a rival in an unauthorised manner. The comparison between these two elections, which seems to be invited by this choice of date, can be read as a reiteration of the validity of the election of Urban VI and criticism of the apparently flimsy excuses presented by the cardinals for quashing it and electing Clement VII. The festival appears to resonate with the assumed aims of the poem; promoting a religious crusade in recognition of Urban VI's papacy. This aspect of the prefatory dating clause may encapsulate the crucial argument for the prosecution of the anti-pope by the spiritual powers, an event that is not actually presented to the audience of this poem.

It is with the surge of enthusiastic and nationalistic endeavour associated with bishop Despenser's crusade that *Adam Davy's Dreams*, read as an allegory, resonates. The poem presents the story of Edward II as uniquely suitable to fulfil the role of spiritual leader for this crusade, as a national icon who stands against usurpation, but who is primarily connected to the greater glory of England, a stance that seems reflected in the rhetoric surrounding this crusade.[116] The technique that the poet employs is deliberately recondite; the

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[115] See: Ullman, *Great Schism*, 69-75, for a translation of the *Declaratio*, of August 1398, which attempted to justify the action of cancelling the election of Urban VI. This notably, was only 'signed by all the non-Italian cardinals who took part in the election'.

[116] Tyerman, *Crusades*, 337, 'official pronouncements stressed the inseparability of national and religious objectives, while effectively implying the secondary nature of the latter.' C. Given-Wilson, ed, 'Richard II: Parliament of October 1382, Text and Translation', Item 23, 'the said crusade, to which the people are greatly devoted, for the salvation of holy church and their souls and the more ardently for the recovery of your [Richard II] rightful inheritance.' *PROME*, accessed 15 September 2013.

prophesies that he presents as having originated in 1307-8, suitable to enhance the reputation of a live king, are all revealed as surpassed or to be surpassed, to the greater posthumous glory of a martyred king and therefore England as a whole. The poet's rhyme may indeed be 'limping' and the whole of 'no special literary value' but viewed as a deliberately conceived piece of propaganda, it is a clever example.[117]

This interpretation presents its own challenges. One of the most significant is that it requires the audience to recognise the 'wicked sarasynes' that Christ and Edward II are pictured as embarking on a 'pilerinage' against are not the holders of the Holy Land but the supporters of the Avignon pope, Clement VII.[118] However, both the papal bulls and Despenser's accompanying mandate equated this enterprise with a venture to regain control of the Holy Land, which provides a basis for such an analogy. Walsingham, in his account of the preliminaries to the battle of Gravelines, reports that Sir Hugh Calveley, one of Despenser's captains, roused the troops by promising that they were 'destined...to receive as great a reward for the killing of such dogs as if they had killed as many Jews or Saracens.'[119] Moreover, a metaphorical or allegorical reading of the issue at the heart of this poem does not conflict with the overall construction as a dream narrative. Of the theories of dream interpretation in the fourteenth century that of Macrobius was 'especially popular'.[120] He determined that dreams fell into five categories, three of which 'were truth-revealing and two of which were not'.[121] As Adam Davy within the poem emphasises the truth and the divine inspiration of his dreams it would

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[117] Matthews, *Writing*, 94; Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 314.
[118] L.84-6, 'Graunte oure kyng, in euery place, / Maistre of his wiþerwynes, / And of all wicked sarasynes!'
[119] *Chronica Maiora*, 200. For an account of how and who Despenser recruited as his captains, see: James Magee, 'Sir William Elmham and the Recruitment for Henry Despenser's Crusade of 1383', *Medieval Prosopography*, 20 (1999), 181-90.
[120] Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 49.
[121] Ibid.

seem that the poem's audience is to assume that these dreams are truth revealing. Macrobius' types of truth revealing dreams are termed *somnium* (where truth is shown allegorically), *visio* (where future truth is shown literally) and *oraculum* (where truth or advice is disseminated by an authorative figure). *Adam Davy's Dreams* can be understood as employing each of these 'truth-revealing' categories; dream one as an allegorical truth revealing account of the deposition or *somnium*, dream three as a *visio* of Edward's recognition as a saint and the voice from heaven that instructs Adam Davy to tell the king his dream, in the non-dream narrative between dreams four and five, accords with *oraculum*.

Beyond this there was a wider perception that could be drawn upon to shape the adherents of the Avignon pope as 'wicked sarasynes'. This stemmed from the contemporary analogy of the Avignon papacy to the Old Testament captivity of the Kings of Judah by the King of Babylon, known as the Babylonian exile.[122] In the Biblical accounts, this exile led to the destruction of Jerusalem.[123] The import of this story for the papacy of Avignon was that the Judeans were given into captivity 'through the anger of the Lord' who 'cast them out from his presence' because the kings 'did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord'. This comparison imputes that the popes of Avignon had angered God, by entering into the 'captivity' of the French and leaving Rome and were therefore banished from his grace.[124] (Further parallels could also be drawn from the destruction of Jerusalem to the decay of Rome that resulted from the removal of the papacy.[125]) Petrarch openly referred to Avignon as

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[122] Gaetano Cipolla, 'Labyrinthine Imagery in Petrarch', *Italica*, 54 (1977), 263-89 at 279-81.
[123] II Kings 24-25.
[124] The *Songe du vergier*, commissioned by the French King Charles V in 1376 even attributed the civil wars in Italy 'to the pope's having deserted the Holy See', Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries*, 101.
[125] See: L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, ed. F. I. Antrobus, I (London, 1938), 68-71.

Babylon and likened the popes to the kings of Persia or Parthia.[126] The Avignon pope and his supporters, in this phrase, are being portrayed as cast out of God's grace (by leaving Rome), living in Babylon (a Saracen city), and acting like the kings of Persia or Parthia (Saracen kingdoms).[127] Therefore, they may be seen as synonymous with 'wicked sarasynes'.[128] At a less literary level the 'wicked sarasynes' can be understood as an appellation that invites similar associations, besides serving the allegorical nature of the narrative. As the campaign mounted against Clement VII was called a crusade then the enemy would generically be 'wicked sarasynes'.[129] Furthermore, the contemporary understanding was that an Anti-Christ, as the Avignon pope was termed by Catherine of Siena, would be supported by Islamists.[130] The poet also links 'wicked sarasynes' to 'wiþerwynes' and

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[126] The view of the Avignon popes as being rapacious was expressed by Petrarch in a letter dated to between 1340-1353 censuring the Avignon papal court, 'instead of the bare feet of the apostles, the snowy coursers of brigands fly past us, the horses decked in gold and fed on gold, soon to be shod with gold, if the Lord does not check this slavish luxury. In short, we seem to be among the kings of the Persians or Parthians', J. H. Robinson, *Readings in European History* (Boston, 1904), 502.

[127] Bernard McGinn, 'Angel Pope and the Papal Antichrist', *Church History*, 47 (1978), 155-73 at 160, 'In an age that continued to look upon poverty as a central element in the life of perfection, the later popes often displayed openly their personal and institutional wealth. Continual criticism of this lack of poverty was a hallmark of popular dissatisfaction with current popes.' P. A. Knapp, *The Style of John Wyclif's English Sermons* (Paris, 1977), 128, States that John Wyclif (1330?-1384) held the view that 'the Schism was a natural consequence of the moral decay of the church, which was to be cured, not by crusades against Christian brethren, but by bringing back the Church to apostolic poverty and simplicity.' He is quoted as described the warring popes as 'two dogs snarling over a bone' (*sicut canibus pro osse rixantibus*).

[128] The contemporary use of faith descriptors as generic insults was demonstrated by Edward's queen, Isabella. She referred to Despenser (the younger) as a 'Pharisee', Phillips, 486; L. F. Cordery, 'The Saracens in Middle English Literature: a Definition of Otherness', *Al-Masaq*, 14 (2002), 87-99 at 90, finds that, 'The terms become interchangeable because the name of the enemy is unimportant; it is only necessary to know that all those who are not like us are the non-believing enemy.'

[129] See: John Gilchrist, 'The Papacy and War against the "Saracens", 795-1216', *The International History Review*, 10 (1988), 174-97.

[130] See: David Burr, 'Antichrist and Islam in Medieval Franciscan Exegesis' in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. J. V. Tolan (Oxford, 2000), 131-52. Catherine of Siena wrote to Urban VI saying, 'Ho inteso che li domini incarnati hanno eletto non cristo in terra, ma fatto nascere anticristo contra voi Cristo in terra' (these devils incarnate have not elected a Christ on Earth, but have brought into being an anti-Christ against you, who are Christ on

through this associates the two groups.[131] This strategy encourages the poem's audience to consider them as one and the same. The enemies of Edward II (and therefore England), which in this interpretation encompasses all those who claimed allegiance to the Avignon pope, are 'wicked sarasynes' who then become legitimate targets of a 'just war'. Most conveniently this included the traditional enemies of England, the French and the Scots.

On this basis the close reading that follows explores *Adam Davy's Dreams*, in its current form, as more feasibly a response to bishop Despenser's crusade than the earlier crusade intent of Edward III or a prophesy celebrating the accession of Edward II.

Returning to the first dream, in which the author bears witness to a surreal scene in Westminster Abbey, this dream is described as taking place on 'þe wedenysday bifore þe decollacioun of seint Ion' (August 29), more than twelve months previously.[132] This is the longest of the five dreams, and as such, it does much to introduce the several strands of perception that its audience needs to grasp. It simultaneously informs the audience of the appropriate perception of circumstances preceding this point in time, while painting its own interpretation of the deposition and interpretively foreshadowing events yet to come.

Reading this dream as a eulogy for the sanctity of Edward II, it is entirely congruent to understand this first dream as a rendition of the deposition. This was the point at which the tensions of the rebellion of Edward's queen were exposed for resolution. The dream narrative starts with a staged revelation of

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Earth), see: *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, eds. C. Muessig, G. Ferzoco and B. M. Kienzle (Leiden, 2012), 96 & n.87.
[131] L.85-6.
[132] L.37.

the identity of the character that is the focus of this dream. The first line speaks of 'a kni3th of mychel mi3th', the next adds his name, 'sir Edward þe kyng' but it is not until the third line of the description, when the author adds, 'Prince of Wales', that the positive deduction can be made, that this can only be Edward II.[133] Of the three Edwards who had ruled by the end of the fourteenth century, the date of the manuscript, only Edward II was both named as Prince of Wales and went on to become king. Furthermore, these three lines set the tone for the poem, indicating that meaning is not presented overtly.

Edward II is then further described as being armed with 'yrne & wiþ stel' and upon 'his helme þat was of stel, A Coroune of gold bicom hym wel'.[134] This experiential account of Edward II places him in a very positive light; he is mighty, well armed and, it is implied, adorns the throne of England every bit as much as his crown becomes him. He is described as the 'faire þing' of England.[135] This poem is not dealing with any of the political realities of the situation, nor shading the character of Edward II in any way – he is the king and therefore glorious and mighty.[136]

This dream takes place at Westminster, as did the deposition, but the author uses this location as both verisimilitude and as an opportunity to liken Edward II to his name saint, Edward the Confessor. By describing Edward II as standing rather than kneeling before the 'shryne of seint Edward' the author

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[133] L.4-6.
[134] L.7-10.
[135] L.6.
[136] This unequivocally positive depiction of Edward II helped to convince commentators on this poem that it was written early in the reign of Edward II - that is before his flaws were apparent. Yet this wholly positive description of the king serves to align him with the 'Last Roman Emperor' tradition, as Coote, *Prophesy*, 47, describes, 'This great ruler will be a mighty warrior, who will subdue pagan lands, and free them from the pagan yoke. He will bring a period of peace and plenty, where men will rejoice.'

implies his equal status with Edward the Confessor, both as a king and a recognised saint.[137] This association is strengthened by the name they share and Edward II's known devotion to the Confessor.[138] This juxtaposition of Edward the Confessor and Edward II could also remind the audience of the delayed canonisation of the Confessor. For in 1139 Innocent II had postponed the request to canonize Edward the Confessor, on the grounds that further supportive testimony was required. Yet Alexander III in 1161 delivered a bull of canonization without requiring any further evidence or taking the matter to council. This matter, if brought to mind, could secure the notion that immediate canonisation was not the norm for English saint kings. Further consideration could raise the issue of papal infallibility, a core issue for those opposed to the Avignon papacy.[139] The case of Edward the Confessor demonstrated that while one pope had required more evidence of sanctity a subsequent one had accepted the matter as proven, an example that challenged the notion of papal infallibility.[140] This reference could also serve as a reminder that sanctity need not be immediately recognised for it to eventuate, in God's good time.[141]

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[137] L.11.

[138] Henry III adopted Edward the Confessor as his patron saint and named his first son (Edward I) in his honour. See: D. A. Carpenter, 'King Henry III and Saint Edward the Confessor: The Origins of the Cult', *EHR*, 122 (2007), 865-91, 870, 881. Edward II was named for his father was therefore also named after the Confessor. For Edward II's personal devotion to the Confessor see: Phillips, *Edward II*, 69-70.

[139] Papal infallibility had been re-asserted by Pope John XXII in the controversy over apostolic poverty, of particular significance to the Franciscans as it was their founder, St. Francis of Assisi, who had championed this view, see: B. Tierney, *Origins of Papal Infallibility, 1150-1350* (Leiden, 1972), 171-204; McGinn, 'Angel Pope', 168-69, argues that John XXII's ruling of 1324 'that the claim that Christ and the Apostles had owned nothing was heretical' led to the formation of 'groups of fervent apocalypticists ... for whom the identification of John XXII and Avigonese successors as Antichrists was a central belief.'

[140] E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford, 1948), 76-8, 82-3; B. W. Scholz, 'The Canonization of Edward the Confessor', *Speculum*, 36 (1961), 38-60.

[141] These allusions also play into the ideas of the 'Last Roman Emperor' for as Coote, *Prophesy*, 47, states, 'There is no evidence that this great emperor will be recognized initially by his people for what he is, although he is their representative in God's plan. The time of his coming is known only to God. He is God's gift to the people and to the entire Christian world.'

Moving on to consider the two knights who restrain Edward II so that 'he ne miȝth þennes goo ne ride', these possibly represent the deposing powers that were holding Edward securely at Kenilworth following his capture in November 1326.[142] Several chronicled versions of the events of the deposition hold that it was reported to those assembled at Westminster that Edward had refused to attend the parliament, which had been summoned in his name.[143] These lines suggest the more likely reality that he was not allowed to attend for fear that his presence would avert the deposition.[144] The author of the dream seems to construct Edward as being there spiritually but not physically, hence his silence. The depicted scene, of a man transformed into the divine by an unopposed attack in a sacred space, also conveys positive connotations of the behaviour of Thomas a Becket onto the figure of Edward II.

That Edward II is represented as being there 'Myd glad chere, & mylde of mood', and despite being well armed, 'Boþe wiþ yrne & wiþ stel', offers no resistance to the attack, is promoting the understanding that Edward II sacrificially accepted the ending of his monarchy.[145] The implication is that he could have resisted but chose not to. This construction renders the deposition a personal act of self-abnegation and sets up Edward II as a Christ like figure who endures the trials and tribulations leading up to his passion willingly, in the knowledge that it serves a greater purpose. Also embedded within this allusion is that Edward II, like Christ, had prescient insight and compliantly accepted this event as the inevitable precursor to his martyrdom. This re-reading of the scene permits a deeper insight into the couplet that describes the attack in Westminster,

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[142] L.14.
[143] Valente, 'Deposition', 855.
[144] Ibid; Phillips, *Edward II*, 525.
[145] L.12, L.8.

No strook ne 3af he a3einward
To þilk þat hym weren wiþerward[146]

The couplet following on from this both heralds and describes the coming martyrdom.

Wounde ne was þere bloody non
Of al þat hym þere was don[147]

Here the poet, through the duplicate use of the word 'þere' as the emphasis, is intimating into the mind of the audience the expectation of bloody wounds and cruel treatment, at some other location. The bloody wounds, that do not happen at this point, will eventuate. Both menace and apprehension are raised by this and for an audience who would have been well aware of Edward's fate this would have been particularly poignant. There is also, in the second line, the suggestion that the author knows more about what happened to Edward at the deposition than he is sharing with his audience, which intensifies the import of the described scene.

That it is Edward's lack of resistance and sanguine acceptance of what is to come that transforms him from king to saint is indicated by the streams of light that are emitted from his ears following this attack.[148]

ffoure bendes alle by rewe on eiþer ere,
Of diuers colours, red & white als hij were;

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[146] L.19-20.

[147] L.21-2.

[148] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 46, is of the opinion that the human ear is a symbol of the betrayal of Christ. This suggests that the poet, by describing lights that stream from Edward's ears, is connecting the deposition with the greatest act of treachery in the Christian understanding. A similar perception may also have been expressed in Philippa of Hainault's votive gift of a golden ear at the tomb of Edward II in 1343, see: Hart, *Historia*, I. 48, 'Et cor et aurem quae ibidem pendentur de auro optulit domina Philippa regina Angliae Edwardi regis tertii consors' (And in the same place was hung a golden heart and ear, offered by the Lady Philippa, Queen of England, Consort of King Edward III).

> Als fer as me þou[ȝth] ich miȝth see,
> hij spredden fer & wyde in þe cuntre.[149]

Coote, albeit writing from the perspective that this poem is a prophesy, affords valuable insights into these beams of light. She describes them as being in the 'colours of blood and purity, of sacrifice and atonement...symbolic of the crucified and resurrected Christ'.[150] This analysis synchronises with the understanding of this particular dream as a retrospective. It is from this understanding of Edward II, as a king made divine through his personal sacrifice for his people, that the impetus to recognise him as a saint can be understood.

The dating clause at the end of this dream acts as a source of reflective reference, pointing back to the narrative and suggesting a further allegorical interpretation that can be laid onto this part of the text. The date for this dream is given as 'þe wedenysday bifore þe decollacioun of seint Ion'.[151] In this, the author is suggesting that this dream has connections with the beheading of Saint John the Baptist and connecting Edward with this venerable figure.[152] These allusions, which are not pointed out to the audience, are multi layered. The beheading itself, the removal of the head from the body, refers to a relatively common metaphor of kingship, the king being understood as the head of the body, which is constituted of the whole of the people.[153] The image of the beheading of the country can be read as a direct riposte to one of the sermons preached in Westminster on 13 January 1327, by the bishop of Winchester, to encourage those assembled to dethrone

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[149] L.31-4.
[150] Coote, Prophesy, 86.
[151] L.37.
[152] See: *The Golden Legend*, ii, 134, for the account of John the Baptist.
[153] This notion was a parallel understanding of the conception of the church as a 'corpus mysticum cuius caput Christus', derived from the Papal Bull, *Unam Sanctam*, of 1302. See: Kantorowicz, *Two Bodies*, 194-206.

Edward II.[154] The biblical text on which this rested was *caput meum doleo* (my head aches) and the ensuing homily likened Edward II to the head of the body of England and contended that a weakness in the head incapacitated the body.[155] The counter argument presented in this poem is that rather than having removed a sickly head they have deposed a saintly figure at the behest of an adulterous woman, thereby decapitating the country.

John the Baptist was both a signifier of Christ and his close blood relative just as Edward II, as king, was considered a spiritual relation of Christ. Aspects of the life (and death) of John the Baptist can therefore be used to imply mystical connections and illuminate similarities between the lives of all three. The most obvious similarity between John the Baptist and Edward II is that they are murdered at the behest of a woman. The implication of this may be that the adulterous relationship between Isabella and Mortimer was the primary motivation for the deposition. This casts Edward as the upholder of morality and his imprisonment as resulting from this. These extended lines of allusion secure ideas of the motives and behaviours of Edward II to the laudatory demeanours demonstrated by two of the greatest personages of the New Testament.

Conversely the dating clause for the second dream is placed before the narrative, indicating that rather than being a reflective device this date is a prefatory key to the interpretation of the dream. This dream takes place 'on a tiwes-niȝth / Bifore the fest of alle halewen'.[156] In this dream, the author sees Edward II riding on an ass, travelling towards Rome, as a pilgrim. Edward II is

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[154] Phillips, *Edward II*, 528.
[155] The text is recorded in the *Forma deposicionis*, 'Capud meum doleo...et protractando per caput ipsum Regem qui est caput regni intelligens pro malo illius capitis gubernaculo se dolere affirmabat et infirmitatem capitis huius in siu dolore retorquebat', Fryde, *Tyranny*, 234.
[156] L.43-4.

garbed in a grey mantle, with a grey cap on his head but, to the author's alarm, his shanks appear 'blood rede'.[157] The significance of the date of this dream, on the vigil of All Hallows, is that this is the night when it was believed that the spirits of the dead returned to earth and communicated with the living.[158] The audience, having been given this context, could then understand this dream as of the now dead Edward II, whose spirit is making its way towards the eternal city of Rome. The description of Edward's cap and mantle being grey, 'symbolising the death of the body and the immortality of the soul' supports this interpretation.[159]

Although the use of an 'Asse' as his steed has indubitable connotations of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, that he was barefoot draws upon another worthy allusion, that of St Peter, who went to Rome without footwear (or money).[160] This coded reference to St Peter forms a building block to the understanding of the third dream and pre-conditions the audience, through appropriate resonances, to understand the author's position. The direct reference to Rome with the allusion to St Peter seems designed to bring the matter of the papacy and the papal city to mind.[161] This could be intended to reflect the contentious matter of the Avignon papacy and the schism, which the author appears to be constructing as the barrier to the recognition of

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[157] L.63.

[158] Charlotte Burne, 'Souling, Clementing and Catterning. Three November Customs of the Western Midlands', *Folklore*, 25 (1914), 285-99 at 286, 'There can, moreover, be little doubt that even in pagan times "November Night" was already an annual Feast of the Dead long before it was transformed by the Church into the two consecutive festivals of All Saints and All Souls'; for a discussion of the evolution of Halloween see: Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (Oxford, 2002).

[159] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 151.

[160] Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature 700-1500* (Woodbridge, 2001), 139.

[161] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries of the Great Schism 1378-1417* (Pennsylvania, 2006), 33, 'The desire that the popes should reside again in Rome was showed by a large variety of individuals. From Saint Birgitta of Sweden (1303-73) to Petrarch (1304-74), from Saint Catherine of Sienna (1347-80) to the saintly Franciscan nobleman fr. Pedro of Aragon (1305-81), people joined forces to campaign to persuade the popes to return to Rome.'

Edward's sanctity.[162] Returning to the narrative, this continues with Edward described as being 'wiþouten hose & sho', despite, as the following line states, 'his wone was nou3th so forto do'.[163] This indicates the significant change that has been engendered in Edward II.[164] Appearing on a lowly mount, barefoot and humble signifies that he has become a saintly figure in the mould of St Peter.[165] Moreover, the surrender of royal clothing was another element in the tradition of 'The Last Roman Emperor' as given in the *Sibille generaliter*.[166]

It is the following couplet that again speaks to an audience that already knows the story of Edward II,

> his shankes semeden al blood rede;
> Myne herte wop for grete drede;[167]

This couplet teases its audience; the shanks 'seem' all blood red, and as the reader has already been told that he is not wearing hose the possibility of this as the colour of his leg wear is ruled out, yet the blood red colour remains an

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[162] The contemporary notion that the Avignon Popes were inherently illegitimate because of their relocation away from the city of the popes is explicitly expressed in the third part of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where St. Peter is voiced as saying, 'He who usurps upon the earth my place, My place, my place, which vacant has become, Before the presence of the son of God', *Para*, XXVII, 22; see: E. Hallam, ed, *Chronicles of the Age of Chivalry* (Godalming, 1998), 151, for an image of a 'medieval map of Rome, personified as a grieving widow in the absence of her beloved papal community.'

[163] L.61-2.

[164] *The Golden Legend*, i, 254, of St Peter records, 'so is called one who takes off his shoes, because he removed and put off all earthly love from the feet of his affection and inclinations'.

[165] This idea also reflects into criticism of the Avignon papacy on the denial of evangelical poverty, see: A. Kenny, *Medieval Philosophy*, ii (Oxford, 2005), 92-5 at 93, Opposition to the papal decrees on this matter, in England, came from William Ockham, who found them 'immoral, absurd and heretical and publicly denounced them'; see also: Patrick Nold, *Pope John XXII and his Franciscan Cardinal Bertrand de la Tour and the Apostolic Poverty Controversy* (Oxford, 2003).

[166] Coote, *Prophesy*, 45.

[167] L.63-4.

uncertainty.[168] The second line then instructs the audience as to the appropriate reaction; the heart beats faster in anticipation of the revelation of the cause of the blood red legs. This speaks of the time between the announcement of the death of Edward II and the pronouncement that he had been murdered. The writer is flattering himself, and his audience, by constructing himself, and inviting them, as having immediately recognised the death as suspicious. This position also reminds its audience that the end of the rule and death of Edward II was a mirror of Christ's passion, following the same course of betrayal and martyrdom.

The third dream is again introduced by its dating clause; it takes place, 'þe wedenysday ... Next þe day of seint lucie bifore cristenmesse'.[169] The significance of the virgin St Lucy to this dream has to be inferred from the previous dream. The previous dream had concluded at the point where Edward was dead but the nature of his death had not been openly acknowledged. This dream may lean into the story of St Lucy to both allude to the most ghastly versions of Edward's murder and to repudiate its befouling nature.[170] The element of the story of St Lucy that is probably being invoked is her response to the threats of Paschasius to have her raped thereby causing the Holy Ghost to depart from her body.[171] She responds to this threat by asserting,

> 'The body is not defiled...unless the mind
> consents. If you have me ravished against my
> will, my chastity will be doubled and the crown [of
> glory] will be mine. You will never be able to force

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[168] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 152. Although red is used to signify martyred saints, in this context it seems to be used more literally, as a description of the blood emanating from Edward's anus and coursing down his legs.

[169] L.69-70.

[170] For the story of Saint Lucy, see: *The Golden Legend*, i. 28-9.

[171] The devolution of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit is signified in Royal Anointing.

> my will. As for my body, here it is, ready for every torture.'172

This association would intimate that any perceived defilement of Edward, through the manner of his death, is reflected back on to the perpetrators and only increases Edward's claim to 'the crown of heaven'.173 The additional implication that could be adopted from the St Lucy story, to illuminate that of Edward II, lies in the fate of Lucy's murderer. *The Golden Legend* asserts that 'envoys from Rome arrived to seize Paschasius and take him in chains to Rome, because Caesar had heard that he had pillaged the whole province. Arriving in Rome he was tried by the Senate and punished by decapitation'.174 This may remind the audience that Edward III (Caesar) accused Roger Mortimer (Paschasius) of similar offences and ordered his execution.175 Read in this manner, the dating clause of this dream could provide a suitable background within which to interpret the elliptical details of the actual dream.

In the third dream, Adam Davy is in Rome, viewing the arrival of the soul of Edward II and the pope. Both the pope and Edward 'hadden a newe dubbyng'; Edward's 'newe dubbyng' is possibly the crown of heaven and the pope's may be the new triple papal crown, which came into use in the earlier part of the fourteenth century.176 The following line 'Hure gray was her

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172 The Golden Legend, i, 28.

173 Similar murders had also been constructed as defiling the effectors rather than the victim, such as that of Edmund Ironside discussed in chapter 4 and the death of the Earl of Hereford in 1322. Brie, *The Brut*, i, 219, accounts the death of the Earl of Hereford as 'a worþi knyght of renoune prou3out al Cristendome' who while fighting, during the Battle of Boroughbridge was attacked by 'a þef, a ribaude [who] scolkede vnder þe brigge, and fersly wiþ a spere smote the noble knyght into þe fondement, so þat his bowailles comen out þere'.

174 The Golden Legend, i, 29.

175 The charges laid against Roger Mortimer included several allegations of unlawful appropriation see: Haines, *Edward II*, 346-7.

176 L.76. Orit Schwartz and Robert E. Lerner, 'Illuminated propaganda: the origins of the "Ascende calve" pope prophecies', *Journal of Medieval History*, 20 (1994), 157-91 at 161, n.10, 'The three-crowned tiara was already used by Benedict XII (1334-1342)...Yet it is rare

cloþing' – seems to imply that both are dead.[177] The symbolic presentation of the pope in Rome (Urban VI) as dead can be read as the culmination of the author's subtly constructed critique of the Avignon papacy. If so it could reveal the philosophical position toward which the audience of the poem are being guided. The pope, preceding the king, is described as being 'mytred wel faire I- wys' - which appears to support the English contention that the election of Urban VI was and remained valid.[178] Edward's entrance is described as 'þe kyng Edward com corouned myd gret blis; þat bitokneþ he shal be / Emperour in cristianete'.[179] The crown that Edward is wearing here could well be 'the crown of heaven', referred to in the story of St Lucy and the accolade of martyrs.[180] Therefore the implication of this dream seems to be that were there a properly recognised pope in Rome then Edward's sanctity would be justly recognised. As this is not the case the author of the poem then appeals to an even higher authority to validate Edward's worth,

> Iesus crist ful of grace,
> Graunte oure kyng, in euery place,
> Maistrie of his wiþerwynes,
> And of alle wicked sarasynes[181]

The fourth dream that follows unsurprisingly tells of Christ coming to the help of the cause for the recognition of Edward's martyred status and overcoming those who are opposed to it. This dream is introduced by a dating clause

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to see a three-crowned tiara in visual representation before the last quarter of the fourteenth century.'

[177] L.77.

[178] L.79. The case presented for the voiding of the election of Urban VI was that the cardinals had only elected him under extreme duress, as they feared for their lives if they failed 'to elect a Roman or at least an Italian', Ullman, *Great Schism*, 69. This contention was regarded as wholly false by the English, see: Leslie Macfarlane, 'An English Account of the Election of Urban VI, 1378', *BIHR*, 26, (1953), 75-85.

[179] L.80-3.

[180] Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols*, 166, 'When the crown is used as the attribute of a martyr, it signifies victory over sin and death'.

[181] L.83-6.

which states that it occurs 'on worþing-niȝth' – the feast of the purification of the Virgin – an association that freights the dream with a density of significance.[182] *The Golden Legend* affords several potential strands of allusion. Firstly, although this day (2 February) is celebrated as the purification of the Virgin, forty days after the birth of Christ, the *Legend* is at pains to point out that she was not in actual need of purification.[183] This may intimate that Edward II, like the Virgin, was an unsullied soul and therefore needed no purification. The reference to Worthing night also raises the issue of redemption through sacrifice. As the Virgin Mary unnecessarily redeemed her son by offering 'two turtledoves or young pigeons so that they could be sacrificed for him' so it might be seen that Edward was equally needlessly purged by his sacrifice of the throne.[184] These subtle ideas are not directly tied to the dream but suggest a backdrop of inference, with which the audience can choose to infuse the dream.

In this dream, the author bears witness to a scene in a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Edward II is not present in this scene, which consists solely of a dialogue between Christ, who is there on the rood, and his mother the Virgin Mary. Christ initiates the action by un-nailing his hands from the rood and asking his mother's permission to leave saying,

> Ich mote conueye þat ilk kniȝth
> þat vs haþ serued day and niȝth:
> In pilerinage he wil gon,
> To bien awreke of oure fon.[185]

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[182] L.87.
[183] *The Golden Legend*, i, 144; the Virgin Mary was not in need of purification as she had not been sullied through carnal intercourse. That she presented herself for this ritual was understood as a demonstration of her humility.
[184] Ibid, i, 145.
[185] L.101-03.

The foes here being referred to, in this interpretation, are the Avignon papacy and its French supporters and the 'pilerinage' that they will go on is against them. The assumption that Christ would naturally side with the English concords with the contemporary popular view that it did not matter that the pope was French as Jesus had become English. This notion is recorded in the chronicle of Henry Knighton as 'Ore est le Pape devenu Franceys e Jesu devenu Engleys'.[186] The conception of Christ, as English was contemporaneously matched by an understanding that the Virgin Mary also had a special regard for England, as it was said to be her 'dowry or morning-gift'.[187] The dating clause of this dream also offers an allusion that can be interpreted as supporting the nationalistic aspect of the proposed crusade, as an expedition of the Hundred Years War, in that the alternative name for Worthing Night is Candlemas.[188] *The Golden Legend* gives the history of this tradition. It states that the custom stems from Roman antecedents as '[o]n the calends of February the Romans honored Februa, mother of Mars the god of war ... in order to obtain victory over their enemies from the son whose mother they so solemnly celebrated'.[189] This scenario is very closely replicated in the dream, with the Virgin Mary representing Februa and Jesus the god Mars. This dream can therefore be seen as alluding to Christ as a supporter of this just war against the Avignon anti-pope and his French supporters.

The dream then ends with the Virgin Mary readily acceding to Christ's request to leave to accompany Edward II, as he has served her both day and night and therefore has 'serued heuene-riche blis'. The reference to Edward II serving the divine both day and night secures him as a righteous person and echoes a passage in Revelation, that speaks of those 'which came out of great

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186 Lumby, *Knighton*, ii, 94.
187 Coote, *Prophesy*, 94.
188 Housley, 'Crusade', 16.
189 *The Golden Legend*, i, 148.

tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night'.[190] This allusion heralds the apocalyptic nature of the fifth and final dream.

The narrative of the fifth dream commences with an angel taking Edward II by the hand and bringing him to stand before the high altar of Canterbury Cathedral.

> þe Aungel bitook sir Edward on honde;
> Al bledyng þe foure forþer clawes so were of þe
> lombe. At Caunterbiry, bifore þe hei3e autere, þe
> kyng stood, ycloþed al in rede: murre he was of
> þat blee red as blood.[191]

That Edward is described as clothed all in red, the point given triple emphasis in a single line, announces that his status as a sacred martyr has become accepted. The 'lombe' in this instance is not only a representation of the crucified Christ but also Christ, the lamb of the Revelation of St John the Divine, signifying the apocalyptic nature of this dream.[192] For Christ as the lamb in Revelation, opens the seals that unleash the apocalypse because 'he alone is worthy'.[193] The 'Aungel' of this dream is so closely related to Christ that they both bear the stigmata. Yet biblically no angel bears the stigmata. This mysterious angel serves to tie together several of the strands of allusion and inference that have been introduced. The angel with stigmata, it can be suggested, is a rendition of St Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, whose presence links the impetus of the poem, as crusade propaganda, to the matters of ecclesiastical poverty, papal infallibility, and the removal of the Holy See from Rome. St. Francis, as the founder of the Franciscan order,

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[190] Revelation 7:14-15.
[191] L.136-40.
[192] Revelation 5: 6.
[193] L. Thompson, 'Cult and Eschatology in the Apocalypse of John', The Journal of Religion, 49 (1969), 330-50 at 335; Revelation 5: 9.

is the revered figure who was perceived to have been most affronted by the Avignon papacy, as it was his rule of absolute poverty that was challenged and personally disregarded by the Avignon papacy. Moreover, his devotion to the holy city of Rome, as the burial place of the apostles Peter and Paul, whose lives he especially revered, was well attested.[194] Therefore, it would be symbolically appropriate that his spiritual presence is included in a vision of God's retribution on the purportedly ignoble institution of a false papacy. His presence as an angelic figure, in a post apocalyptic dream would not have surprised contemporary readers. For his holiness, as demonstrated by his desire to live a life of apostolic poverty and having been marked by the stigmata, was so revered that, after his death, writers and artists had come to perceive him as a human embodiment of Christ, or either the Angel of the sixth seal or the Angel Michael of the book of Revelation.[195]

The 'aungel' of Adam Davy's last dream could equally easily be the Angel of the sixth seal or the Angel Michael. This depends upon which stage of the apocalypse the author is envisaging. The Angel of the sixth seal appears in the seventh chapter of the Revelation; he is described as 'having the seal of the

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[194] Michael Robson, *St. Francis of Assisi: The Legend and the Life* (London, 1997), 63-7.
[195] R. K. Emmerson and R. B. Herzman, *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature*, (Philadelphia, 1992), 77, 40, suggest that Gerard of Borgo San Donnino's *Liber Intoductorius in evangelium aeternum* 'seemed to blur any real distinction between Francis and Christ'. Although this view was condemned as heresy in 1255, H. W. van Os, 'St. Francis of Assisi as a second Christ in early Italian painting', *Simiolus*, 7 (1974), 115-32 at 123, finds evidence of it, continued on seals 'from the end of the thirteenth century onwards' and in paintings after 1400. St. Bonaventura's biography of St Francis, the *Legenda Maior*, became the official account of his life in 1266. Emmerson and Herzman, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 36-75, make a convincing argument for the *Legenda* presenting St. Francis as the angel of the sixth seal. However, F. D. Klingender, 'St. Francis and the Birds of the Apocalypse', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*,16 (1953), 13-23, presents a particularly English variation of the understanding of the *Legenda* which conflates the Angel Michael of the Apocalypse with St. Francis, the two, he argues, having become linked by their association with birds. Leading to a position that he describes, at 19, as '[f]or the English illuminators of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries...Michael, the angel of the Apocalypse *was* St. Francis'. This extreme view was challenged, after Klingender's death, by R. Freyhan, 'Joachism and the English Apocalypse', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18 (1955), 211-44.

living God'.[196] This 'seal' was considered to be synonymous with the stigmata of St. Francis and it was on this basis that the two could be understood as one. The Angel of the sixth seal effects a pause in the apocalyptic process, to allow the 'sealing' of the worthy to save them from eternal destruction.[197] This action too can be seen as reflected in the life of St. Francis, whose earthly life was devoted to the saving of eternal souls.

The understanding of St. Francis as an embodiment of the Angel Michael of the book of Revelation appears to stem from a particularly English and darker understanding of St. Francis. Matthew Paris, the chronicler of St. Albans, in his *Chronica Maiora* of c.1250 re-wrote the story of the sermon of the birds as an invective by St. Francis against Pope Innocent III, following his 1210 appearance before the pope seeking papal approval for his new order.[198] Jacques Le Goff reports Matthew Paris's account as saying,

> 'the saint, wounded by his reception by the Romans, by their vices and vileness, called the birds from the sky, even the most aggressive, those with dangerous beaks, birds of prey and crows, to teach them the good news, not the miserable Romans.'[199]

Le Goff says of this account that 'it is easy to see that this anecdote comes from Revelation 19: 17-18', where an angel summons birds of prey to feast

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[196] Revelation 7: 2.
[197] Revelation 7: 3-12.
[198] Jacques Le Goff, *St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. Christine Rhone, (London, 2004), 34. The accounts of the meeting between Pope Innocent III and St. Francis vary. According to Robson, *St. Francis*, 75, St. Bonaventure's account records that Pope Innocent III initially 'indignantly sent him away'. Le Goff, 33, suggests that there were three meetings between the Innocent III and the St. Francis, culminating in limited verbal approval, demanding 'that Francis promise obedience to the pope' and that he 'only gave them permission to preach, that is, to give people moral exhortations' and noting that the pope did not sanction the creation of the Franciscans as a Major order.
[199] Le Goff, *St. Francis*, 34.

on the flesh of the damned, after the destruction of Babylon.[200] Babylon is destroyed because it 'is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit'.[201] Le Goff considers that Paris's account 'shows that the extremist Franciscan party may have wanted to have the order's founder assimilate Rome and the church with accursed Babylon'.[202] It is from this strand of perception that St. Francis, as apocalyptic angel and rebuker of popes, becomes an appropriate persona to be a key element in this dream.

This poem represents the sanctity of Edward II as an established fact; it is only the matter of his canonisation that remains to be resolved. In the poem, he is likened to John the Baptist and Christ. He warrants the support of Christ and the Virgin Mary in his endeavours. He is seen as a worthy compatriot to St. Francis of Assisi in a struggle to re-assert the authority of God's rule on earth. He is the equal of St. Edward the Confessor and St. Thomas a Becket.

Questions about the intended audience and purpose of this piece are almost impossible to answer. It is possible that it was written as an aid in collecting either recruits or money for the crusade, but given that most of the available evidence suggests that it was the promised indulgences that spurred people to support the cause, this seems an unwarranted effort. That it is presented in the vernacular could imply expectation of a popular audience but the subtlety of the indirect allusions and the overall allegorical style suggests otherwise. Perhaps it was written for bishop Despenser himself – but again this appears unlikely as there is no direct reference to either him or his cause. However it

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[200] Ibid, 34; Revelation 19: 17-18, 'And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of they that sit on them, and the flesh of men, both free and bond, both small and great.'
[201] Revelation 18: 2.
[202] Le Goff, St. Francis, 34.

is known that clerics were called upon to publicise the call for crusade, with some of the bishop's own monks joining the fighting, as Walsingham records 'it was discovered that some of the bishop's monks killed sixteen men'.[203] Possibly it was one of these 'monks' who penned or adapted the poem for this crusade and being so close to the events and them being so publicly known perceived no need to make explicit the matter of which he wrote.

This close reading cannot preclude the poem from having been produced at an earlier date and for a different context. However, as has been acknowledged by previous writers, the fifth dream is conceptually at odds with the 1307-8 date implied in the text itself. If, as Coote has suggested, this dream was added after the death of Edward II then the question arises as to when and why such an addition seemed appropriate.[204] The crusade intentions of Edward III in the 1330's affords a narrow window of opportunity but this appears compromised by the sense of urgent immediacy of the crusade intent conveyed within the poem, which does not appear reflected in the realities of the time. Furthermore, the poem appears to project Edward II as worthy of recognition as a national saint and the 1330's seems far too soon for such a notion to have gained currency. Instead, of the negative arguments against the earlier dates, it can be suggested that it was the association of Edward II with usurpation and usurpers that rendered him uniquely suitable as a figurehead for an English crusade against a usurper pope. Therefore, it is contended, that for bishop Despenser's crusade of 1383, the saintly identity of Edward II, as a martyred king of England, who stood against usurpers, would have been perceived as an appropriate champion.

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[203] *Chronica Maiora*, 201.
[204] Coote, *Prophesy*, 89.

Conclusion

The conceptualisation of Edward II after September 1327 was only of consequence because of his royal blood and status. As Marc Bloch has asserted, 'the idea of royalty as something miraculous and sacred was common to the whole of Western Europe.'[1] This was manifested in the collective consciousness by a belief in the healing powers of the king's touch and even that their curative power could be transmitted through objects, which 'by virtue of their consecration at the hands of the king, were held to have acquired the power to restore health'.[2] Much more potent than a touch or object consecrated by a royal was royal blood, particularly that shed dishonourably. Royal blood was seen as having a stronger connection with the divine and on this basis the violent spilling of royal blood was imbued with connotations of Christ's sacrifice of his blood, memorialised in the ritual of the mass. The notion of kingship as a sacral and irrevocable office was a fundamental conception. The anointed king was perceived as an embodiment of the spirituality of the people; his righteousness was a reflection of and reflected onto them. Death, particularly of kings, expunged any sins in life and restored them in the public memory as 'christus Domini'.[3] Moreover, the murder of a king was a heinous crime, one that violated the whole kingdom.[4]

Therefore, the announced murder of Edward II, three years after his death, is likely to have impinged on all the people of England regardless of factionalism and naturally aroused popular devotion.[5] Notwithstanding Edward II's removal from the throne the importance of his good standing

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[1] Marc Bloch, The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France, trans. J. E. Anderson (London, 1973), 5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Kantorowicz, Two Bodies, 13; William A. Chaney, The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England (Manchester, 1970), 252.
[4] Kantorowicz, ibid, 15.
[5] Cubitt, 'Sites and sanctity', 53.

with *God was a matter of concern, for he remained a Lord's anointed.* Moreover, the posthumous transformation of Edward II from unworthy king to martyr saint held cultural advantages. It permitted the overwriting of the deposition of Edward II as a *rex inutilis* into a supreme sacrifice, willingly made by a noble king for the sake of his people and his son.

The allusions employed within the literary works discussed in this thesis portray Edward II as a hermit or a new Boethius. He is represented as the equal of Edward the Confessor and Thomas a Becket and even as a mirror of John the Baptist and Christ in his sacrifice and suffering, which form the basis of his right to sanctity. These cogent analogies, found in sources written in Latin, Anglo-Norman and English, available to a wide range of audiences, support the contention that there was a generalised awareness, if not acceptance, of Edward II as a saintly persona. Moreover, none of these texts can be demonstrated to have been produced under the aegis or influence of the abbey church of St Peter's Gloucester, which further suggests that the spread of this belief was not solely centred on the burial site.

As this thesis has argued the two proclamations, which by their interaction permitted this cultural response, were that of Edward's voluntary resignation of the throne and that of his murder. This begs the question of whether Edward II came to be regarded as a saint because he was a murdered royal or if the idea of him as a saint was dependent on his perceived sacrifice of the throne for his people and his son.

The binary coil of the two announcements is difficult to disentangle, as they are not consistently represented in the literary pieces discussed in this thesis. The *Lament* does not include the idea of voluntary resignation; in this

poem, Edward was deposed through 'their false faith in parliament' and his forthcoming martyrdom is that of a falsely accused innocent.[6] Baker's chronicle shapes the voluntary resignation as a Christ like self-sacrifice made in full knowledge that it would entail martyrdom.[7] The *Fieschi Letter* reports that 'he lost the crown at the insistence of many', which indicates deposition rather than abdication.[8] In *Adam Davy's 5 Dreams*, the first dream combines the un-resisted loss of the crown with the acceptance of forthcoming martyrdom into a tableau that transforms Edward from king to saint.[9] However, rather than regarding these pieces as suggesting that there was confusion or even a developing tradition of what made Edward II worthy of veneration, these sources should be viewed as specifically manipulated narratives that inherently rely upon the acceptance of Edward II as a martyr-saint. It is only the *a priori* recognition of the sanctity of Edward II that allows their construction. These pieces of literature deploy the posthumous reputation of Edward II as a political tool and therefore nuance their material to meet their specific requirements. They are concerned with the political identity of the sanctity not the sanctity itself. Such constructions are imaginative emanations arising from a fundamental certainty of Edward II as a saint, represented by a religious cult that was almost inimical to the murder of a king.

The paramount significance of the announcement of the murder is confirmed by the chronology of the veneration. As Walker points out, but interprets negatively, 'the inception of Edward's cult did not follow immediately on his

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[6] Aspin, *Political Songs*, 100.
[7] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 26, 'Knowing that a good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, he was more ready to end his life as a follower of Christ than to look with the eyes of a living body upon the disinheritance of his sons or a lengthy civil war in his kingdom.'
[8] Cuttino and Lyman, 'Where is', 536.
[9] Furnivall, *Adam Davy*, L.19-22, 'No strook ne Šaf he aŠeinward / To þilk þat hym weren wiþerward / Wounde ne was þere bloody non / Of al þat hym þere was don'.

internment; the prayers and offerings are said to have begun in time of Abbot Wigmore, who was elected in 1329'.[10] This infers that a king who had voluntarily ceded the throne and then died did not qualify as a saint, whereas the announcement that he had been murdered sparked a re-shaping in the social consciousness, transforming him into a saint. From this, it becomes apparent that it was the announcement of the murder that was the catalyst for the cult of Edward II. The earlier announcement of his voluntary resignation of the throne was a useful confirmatory adjunct to his sanctity but insufficient in itself to warrant sanctity.[11]

There are therefore two aspects to his cult, the primary religious veneration for a murdered king and the secondary political utility, which operate in relative independence. The primary cult was probably marked by an efflorescence of veneration, immediately following the announcement of the murder, followed by a gradual diminishment, to a point of stasis, which once reached would have been maintained, irrespective of politics.[12] As Kleinberg has argued, once 'the true nature of the martyrdom was established, rejecting the martyr's sanctity was psychologically unthinkable.'[13] However, the political utility of the cult of Edward II, although plastic in interpretation, was firstly subject to the expediencies of Edward III and then the turbulent dynastic storms of the changing dynasties of Lancaster, York and Tudor. It found its only royal champion in the reign of Richard II, when a saintly ancestor who stood against usurpation became an advantageous weapon. It

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[10] Walker, 'Political saints', 81.
[11] G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. Eva Palmai (Cambridge, 2002), 56, 'saints, the repositories of supernatural power (a power which they actively exercised even in death) acquired this invincible power precisely by having renounced the forms of earthly power, uncompromisingly but non-violently standing their ground, and suffering injustice with fortitude.'
[12] Hart, *Historia*, i, 46; *Polychronicon*, viii, 324. For graphic representations of shrine offerings over time, see: Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 234-41.
[13] Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', 185.

can be conjectured whether Richard II sought the canonisation of the political saint or the royal martyr-saint. Although we cannot know which aspect was uppermost in his mind, it is worth remembering that the vital evidence for canonisation came from attested miracles not political power.

The cult of Thomas of Lancaster, cousin of Edward II, which is held up as a prime exemplar of late medieval political sainthood, affords a parallel that substantiates the importance of royal blood and the dual aspect of such cults.[14] Lancaster was publically beheaded, following a trial of dubious legality, at which he had not been allowed to speak.[15] The full sentence of hanging, drawing and quartering was remitted 'out of reverence for his royal blood'.[16] His execution took place at Pontefract, in the heart of his own very substantial power base. A cult very rapidly grew up around his memory, which focussed on the supernatural powers of his royal blood, unjustly shed.[17] A surviving office of his consistently reminds its audience of his royal blood.[18] The most substantial of these references alludes to the fact that both his mother and father were of royal blood, 'Thomas sprang from a royal race by both his parents, whose father was the son of a king, and whose

[14] Walker, 'Political Saints', 83; Phillips, *Edward II*, 600. J. T. McQuillen, 'Who was Thomas of Lancaster? New Manuscript Evidence' in *Fourteenth Century IV*, ed., J. S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), 1-25 at 12, 'politics and religion were not compartmentalised during the period, and Thomas's cult could function in the context of both political revolt and religious worship'.

[15] Childs, *Vita*, 214.

[16] Ibid, 212, 'ob reuerenciam regii sanguinis'.

[17] J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322* (Oxford, 1970), 329, 'News of the miracles at his tomb was brought to the King at the York parliament which met within six weeks of Lancaster's death.' Danna Piroyansky, 'Bloody Miracles of a Political Martyr: The Case of Thomas Earl of Lancaster' in *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representation of Divine Power in the Life of the Church*, eds. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge, 2005), 228-38, *passim*.

[18] The office is found in BL, MS Royal 12 C XII, f.1. Wright, *Political Songs*, 268-72, offers a transcription and translation. See: also, C. Page, 'The Rhymed Office for St Thomas of Lancaster: Poetry, Politics and Liturgy in Fourteenth-Century England', *Leeds Studies in English*, 14 (1984), 134-51.

mother Navarre raised to be a queen.'[19] Other contemporary sources also emphasise that it was the shedding of Thomas's 'gentil blode' that acted as the crucial motivator for the abhorrence of his execution and provided the vital framework for the construction of his sanctity.[20] One contemporary chronicler exclaimed 'Oh princely blood, extraordinary blood, noble blood, and precious blood also, why [were you] so contemptibly shed?'[21] Lancaster's death was rapidly seen as a sacrifice for the political cause that he had endorsed (that of getting Edward II to abide by the ordinances of 1311).[22] However, the 'first' and indicative miracle of Thomas of Lancaster was not political but curative, directly linked to the healing properties of royal blood.[23] A letter sent to the pope in 1327, exploring the possibility of Lancaster's canonisation, also emphasised the significance of his blood.[24] As Piroyansky noted in her discussion of the cult - 'Lancaster's blood was central to his martyrological image'.[25] This implies the primacy of Lancaster's royal blood in the construction of him as a martyr. Viewed in this way it can be seen that the brutal spilling of royal blood mentally demanded a cogent, moral justification to balance the value of the offering. Christ retrospectively was perceived as having sacrificed his blood to save the world, so Lancaster's death, *imitatio Christi*, was seen as a blood sacrifice for the people of England.[26]

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[19] Wright, ibid, 270, 'De parentis utriusque regali prosapia / Prodit Thomas, cujus pater proles erat regia / Matrem atque sublimavit reginam Navarria.'

[20] Piroyansky, 'Bloody Miracles', 237.

[21] Ibid, from BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra D. IX fols. 83r-85r, transcribed and edited by G. L. Haskins, 'A Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II', *Speculum*, 14 (1939), 73-81 at 79.

[22] Childs, *Vita*, 31-9.

[23] Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 37. For the miracle, see: Brie, *The Brut*, I, 228-9, which tells of a blind priest who regained his sight after having touched his eyes with 'a drope of dry bloode' found at the site of Lancaster's execution.

[24] Piroyansky, 'Bloody Miracles', 232.

[25] Ibid, 234.

[26] McQuillen, 'Who was Thomas of Lancaster', 12, 'Lancaster martyred himself in order to unmask a tyrannical ruler, giving his life for the greater benefit of England'.

The cult of Thomas of Lancaster exposes the fallacy that only those who lived an exemplary life would gain popular acceptance as martyr-saints. For Higden whose condemnation of the cult of Edward II was accepted by Walker as recording a 'popular debate over Edward's sanctity', which was 'generally settled to the king's disadvantage' was even more scathing on the cult of Thomas of Lancaster.[27] Higden reports that it was alleged that the earl 'defouled a greet multitude of wommen and of gentil wenches', that he killed men for the merest slight and favoured 'postataes [sic]' and 'evil doers', believing himself to be above the law.[28] The chronicler concluded that Lancaster's evil deeds far outweighed any of his reported righteousness and therefore found that he 'schulde nought be acounted a saynt'.[29] This, it can be suggested, indicates that Higden's 'debate' was a rhetorical stance, adopted to make his determinations appear the result of a balanced consideration, rather than a churchman's invective against popular sanctity.

Reading back from the cult of Thomas of Lancaster to the case of Edward II, the similarities in their structuring become more obvious. They were both, like Christ, silent or silenced in the face of the accusations against them. Yet, the announced murder of Edward II could have aroused even more intense feelings than that of Thomas of Lancaster, for not only was Edward of royal blood he was also an anointed king. However, his death unlike his cousin's was not a public event and his murder was assumed not to have externally violated his body. As Piroyansky points out, these circumstances did not allow for the vivid eyewitness accounts of the dismembering of a royal body or the imagery of blood spurting out of gaping wounds, which are a major

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[27] Walker, 'Political Saints', 84; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 318, quotes Trevisa's translation of Higden, 'Of this erle and of his dedes, is ofte greet stryf among comoun peple, whether he schulde be accounted for seyntes other none...schulde nought be acounted a saynt'.
[28] Maddicott, ibid.
[29] Ibid.

feature of the cult of Thomas of Lancaster.[30] Notwithstanding this, the death of Edward II was inherently more shocking than Lancaster's in that it was an unprepared death. Lancaster had at least known he was to be executed and had the opportunity to render himself spiritually ready. Murder, as opposed to execution, intrinsically encompasses the element of surprise and secrecy, leaving the victim with no opportunity for prayers or appropriate spiritual support.[31]

In the lack of any information about the means of murder, allied with the idea that the king's body had shown no overt signs of violence the impetus was to imagine a horrifically brutal and foul death, to reflect the perceived desecration of a sacral object and an outrageous attack on the core institution of the English people. The narrative that most met these needs and which became the dominant account was graphically described in the *Brut* and expanded upon to include the agonised death screams in Baker's account.[32] These vivid accounts encourage their audiences to engage closely with the narrative by conjuring an emotional context to the murder and offering insights into the feelings and characters of the protagonists. In this, rather than the simple spilling of royal blood as the locus of horror, it is the subjugation, humiliation and desecration of the royal body of an anointed king. Therefore, it can be contended, that even more than the public execution of Thomas of Lancaster, the imagined and therefore unbounded accounts of the last weeks of Edward II's life were a reflection of the deeply

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[30] Piroyansky, *Martyrs*, 101, 'Death shrouded in mystery was not an auspicious starting point for a martyr's cult, because of its diminished immediacy compared to any detailed eyewitness account.' For a consideration of the imagery and texts relating to the cult of Lancaster, see: McQuillen, 'Who was Thomas of Lancaster', *passim*.

[31] See: for example, Brie, *Brut*, i, 253, where the murderers ensure the king is of 'gode chere and gode solace' to ensure that he does not suspect what is to happen and launch their attack while he 'slepte faste'.

[32] Ibid; Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 32, 'His loud cries were heard by men inside and outside the castle, who knew well enough that someone was suffering a violent death.'

acculturated sense of spiritual trauma, aroused by this event. It was this sense of spiritual trauma that found reconciliation and amelioration in regarding the slain as a saint and the whole nefarious event a sacrifice willed by God. The *Brut*, which contains the earliest extant version of the death by impalement, reflects the shift in the popular perception of Edward II, brought about by the announcement of his murder and secures the episode within the will of God.[33]

Just as the violent death of Thomas of Lancaster demanded a cause for which he could be seen to have sacrificed his precious blood, so did that of Edward II. The basis of this was provided by the official proclamation that he had voluntarily resigned the throne, in favour of his son, which was re-shaped by Baker to encompass the good of the people, in the avoidance of civil war. Therefore, he, like Thomas of Lancaster and Christ was presented as dying for the greater good of the people. Both he and Lancaster, like Christ, were despoiled of dignity by the events leading up to their vile deaths. They like Christ were posthumously elevated in dignity, Christ as the king of heaven and Edward and Lancaster as martyr-saints. This restoration of the dignity accorded to those of royal blood was, it seems, a cultural need, to confirm the inherent righteousness of the spiritual hierarchy.

Both Lancaster's and Edward's death were avenged, Lancaster's by Edward II's downfall and death and Edward II by the execution of Roger Mortimer.[34] This as Higden notes was one of the indicators of sanctity, understood as

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[33] Mortimer, 'Sermons of Sodomy', 58; Brie, *Brut*, I, 242, describes the failings of Edward II and welcomes his deposition - 'but now ȝe beþ wiþstand, - þankede be God!' Ibid, 252, in the prefatory comments to the murder scene, records, 'allas for his tribulcioun! and sorwe him bifelle þrouȝ false consel þat he leuede, & truste oppon ham to miche, þat afterward was destroyede þrouȝ her falsenesse, as God wolde.'

[34] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 42, 'by the verdict of the parliament of the realm...he was drawn and hung on the common gallows of thieves'.

God's vengeance, and therefore he records of Lancaster 'also his enemyes durede afterward but a while, and deyde in shameful deeth.'[35] Any perceived irony in that it was Edward II's 'shameful deeth' that augmented Lancaster's dossier of righteousness would have been lost in contemporary understanding. The axiom of martyrdom was that 'life, previous to his passion was irrelevant'.[36] Thus, both Lancaster and Edward became martyrs against tyranny, Lancaster for standing against Edward's tyranny and Edward as the symbol of the tyranny and usurpation of Isabella and Mortimer. Moreover, the propitious events that seemed to stem from these deaths, in Lancaster's case the downfall of Edward II, in Edward's case the freeing of Edward III from usurpation, which enabled him to win glorious victories in France, demonstrated God's hand in both events.[37]

Despite having argued for the similarity of the construction of these two cases, it cannot be denied that there appears to be more material evidence relating to the posthumous reputation of Thomas of Lancaster than Edward II. This has been taken to indicate a deeper and more significant veneration for Thomas than Edward.[38] This understanding can be challenged. A significant amount of the evidence for the early vitality of Lancaster's cult stems from efforts made to suppress it and prevent pilgrims gathering either at the site of his execution or at St Paul's (where a tablet commemorating the ordinances was displayed).[39] The veneration of Edward II was not opposed and therefore lacks any of this type of evidence. The offices composed for Lancaster, which may never have been liturgically performed

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[35] Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 318.

[36] Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', 185.

[37] Preest and Barber, *le Baker*, 6, of the birth of the future Edward III, 'He was to be the great conqueror of the French, the terror of the Scots, and the one who by direct line of descent from the royal blood of England and France would inherit both kingdoms.'

[38] Phillips, *Edward II*, 603-5.

[39] Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 329; Page, 'Rhymed Office', 135.

and were possibly 'intended for use as political songs' seek to persuade of sanctity, rather than treating it as an established fact.[40]   In the case of Edward II, the murder of an anointed king *ipso facto* produced a martyr-saint and therefore required no persuasive arguments. The beheading of Lancaster was readily transferable to visual imagery, the impalement of Edward II was much less so, and also was not an established fact. This may explain why his pilgrim badges, based on coins of his realm, merely show a crowned king but also, it is suggested, this was all that was required to represent him as a martyr-saint. Later representations of the king, such as in the church at Strensham or on the tomb of Prince Arthur, show him with a spit, which illustrates how this story of his murder became the accepted version.   When the pilgrim badges were designed, it did not matter how he had been murdered; the fact that he was a murdered king sufficed.

This reveals the main barrier to an exploration of the cult of Edward II. For although he was venerated after his death was announced as a murder, the political utility of his cult, as a national saint, was limited. This thesis finds that he became what may be termed a quiet saint, one that was accepted without controversy but little brandished. Therefore, the subtle traces of his posthumous reputation, as a saint, became easily overlooked and since the Reformation largely forgotten or overwritten. Previous studies of the veneration of post-conquest figures have tended to focus on obvious and visible evidence, produced either as argument for their sanctity or during their factional political deployment. The problem with this approach is that in the case of Edward II, whose sanctity was not contested and which held little political utility, the lack of obvious evidence is accepted as lack of veneration.

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[40] Page, ibid, 138. See: for example, Wright, *Political Songs*, 268, 'Lancaster, who by thy death imitatest Thomas of Canterbury; whose head was broken on account of the peace of the Church, and thine is cut off for the cause of the peace of England.'

An example of the casual and therefore unrecognised sublimation of the memory of Edward II into the higher echelons of the spiritual hierarchy perhaps may be found in the *Luttrell Psalter*. The patron of this important fourteenth century psalter, Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, was a recognised political supporter of Thomas of Lancaster.[41] Indeed, one of the better-known images of the execution of Lancaster is contained in a lower margin illustration.[42] Therefore, this is not a place that one would expect to find positive references to the posthumous reputation of Edward II. Yet Michelle Brown has suggested that two of the images on f.68r, at the conclusion of psalm 35, are perhaps a 'veiled allusion to the scandalous conduct of Queen Isabella' and her lover Mortimer.[43] Her suggested understanding of these images is premised on her appreciation of the young queen pictured in a historiated initial, on the same page, as being Isabella.[44] Brown does not try to relate these images to the text that they decorate and therefore does not explore why they should appear at this point in the psalter. However, the relationship between the images in the Luttrell Psalter and the text is not always apparent or coherent.[45]

Despite this and building upon Brown's understanding, it could be argued that psalms 35 and 36 in this psalter are illustrated by images that bind the text of these psalms to the story of Edward's deposition, engendered by the

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[41] Michelle Brown, *The Luttrell Psalter: A Facsimile* (London, 2006), 36; McQuillen, 'Who was Thomas of Lancaster', 13.

[42] Brown, ibid, 36, 'A small inscription in lead-point in a contemporary English cursive script runs beneath the raised sword and reads "Lancastres"'.

[43] Ibid, 38, 'A young male acrobat balances upon his shoulders the sinuous figure of a young of a young woman. He glances sideways to engage the upturned gaze of a young queen whose head, dressed to resemble that of the female acrobat, is contained within a historiated minor initial D.'

[44] Ibid.

[45] L. F. Sandler, 'The Word in the Text and the Image in the Margin: the Case of the Luttrell Psalter', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 54 (1996), 87-99 at 87, 'Some images are simple equivalents of the sense as well as the words and phrases in the psalms, some are pictorial examples of text passages, some picture words out of context, some are collections of word-images from separate text passages, and some are even based on single syllables.'

'false witness' of Isabella and Mortimer, who are driven by their lust to 'devise deceitful matters'.[46] The choice of psalms 35 and 36 as an analogue for Edward II's downfall would be apt. Psalm 35 is an imprecatory psalm, written by King David, which calls on God to 'fight against them that fight against me'.[47] For the psalm alleges 'False witness did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.'[48] Moreover, the voice of the psalms consistently asserts the king's own position as that of a righteous innocent who has been abused by those that he trusted.[49] This therefore can suggest that the sexualised grotesque hybrids on f.67r and f.68r that bookend the sequence, including the images referred to by Brown, may be images of Isabella and Mortimer, exposing their concealed obscenity.[50] Both figures are proximate to verses that can be interpreted as calling attention to their vileness.[51] The young queen in the historiated initial on f.68r (which Brown suggests represents Isabella), who is reflected in the female acrobat on the same page, accords with this understanding. This impression is not contested by the line filler that forms the upper margin decoration for this page. For although Michelle Brown primarily described this as 'an aged man or woman in a shroud like cloak and a youth' she also offered a secondary interpretation that fits with this perception - 'the elderly crone, who is draped in purple like the female acrobat, is an aged version of her and the queen. The youth likewise

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[46] Psalm 35, v.11, v.20.
[47] Ibid, v.1.
[48] Ibid, v.11-12.
[49] Ibid, v.14-15, 'I behaved as if he had been my friend or brother...But in mine adversity they rejoiced and gathered themselves together: yea the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not.'
[50] Brown, Luttrell Psalter, 37, 'the upper body of an attractive young woman with flowing hair and hand placed on her provocatively swaying hip'; 38, 'bearded, hooded man pulls aside his tunic to reveal the lower body of a hybrid grotesque'.
[51] The female hybrid is aligned to Psalm 35 v.21, 'Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.' Brown, Luttrell Psalter, 37, points out that the grotesque line filler that ends this verse 'seems to point to where her genitalia should be'. The male hybrid, sits below Psalm 36 v.2-3, 'For he flattereth himself in his own eyes until his iniquity be found to be hateful. / The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit'.

resembles the man holding the woman aloft.'[52] Brown's primary interpretation of this representation was through the lines below the image, however if read as line filler to the previous verse, its meaning resonates with the whole sequence. For the verse it completes reads, 'Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.'[53] On this basis the line filler can be understood as picturing the contemporary (and therefore older) Isabella, 'clothed with shame', conversing in sign language with Mortimer, who is still presented as the 'youth' he was when executed in 'dishonour'. Through this parataxis the illustrators of the psalter (and it has been argued that its Lancastrian patron 'had a strong hand in the design and decoration') seem to silently conflate Edward II with the biblical prophet and typology of Christ, King David.[54] This example, although conjectural, accords with the overall understanding, which is that the exaltation of the idea of Edward II, as a betrayed and murdered king, was quiescently adopted into the cultural understanding of the period.

This case study of the sanctity of Edward II is only one element of a larger picture, which is how the English people reconciled the spiritual abruption caused by the removal from the throne of an anointed king with the idea of a sacral, God ordained, monarchy. The making and un-making of kings was viewed as the work of God and therefore when a king was removed from the throne and another chosen by the people, this caused social distress. By accepting the deposition of Edward II, England had to confront one of the

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[52] Brown, Luttrell Psalter, 38.
[53] Psalm 35, v.26.
[54] McQuillen, 'Who was Thomas of Lancaster', 13. R. A. Shoaf, 'The Alliterative Morte Arthure: The Story of Britain's David', The Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy, 81 (1982), 204-26 at 204, 'its analogues, whether stated or unstated, and the rhetoric which unites author and audience is explicit: every author, posits exempla with an audience in mind, and every audience knows that the analogies of which it is reminded were intended.'

most significant paradoxes of its contemporary culture, custom and law. In this case, it can be seen, retrospectively, that this was managed by recourse to deeply acculturated understandings of the sanctity of royal blood, closely allied to the model Christ-like sacrifice, utilising pre-existing literary and cultural templates.

Illustrations

1. Isabella Badge: The British Museum, WITT.269, 'Badge (?); lead; boat with crowned female with crowned ithyphallus on arm and holding phallus in other hand.'

2. Mothere Badge: The British Museum, AN1578801, 'Pilgrim-badge; lead alloy; arched canopy decorated with crockets and surmounted by trefoil; two figures, female figure to right, crowned and holding staff, younger male figure to her left.'

3. Scale drawing of the tomb of Edward II, from the north side. Kindly supplied by Carolyn Heighway and Richard Bryant.

4. Detail of the effigy of Edward II, showing the detail of the orb. Courtauld Institute of Art, image 166816.

5. Edward II pilgrim badge? Museum of London, A2520, '14 Century, ?St Edward the Confessor; crowned head with beard and long hair in circular pearled frame'.

6. Silver penny of Edward II.

7. English Heritage image: aa108536. A roof boss in Bristol Cathedral, north transept, of a naked contorted king.

8. English Heritage image: aa108537. A roof boss in Bristol Cathedral, north transept, of a double crowned and naked king, pointing towards his anus

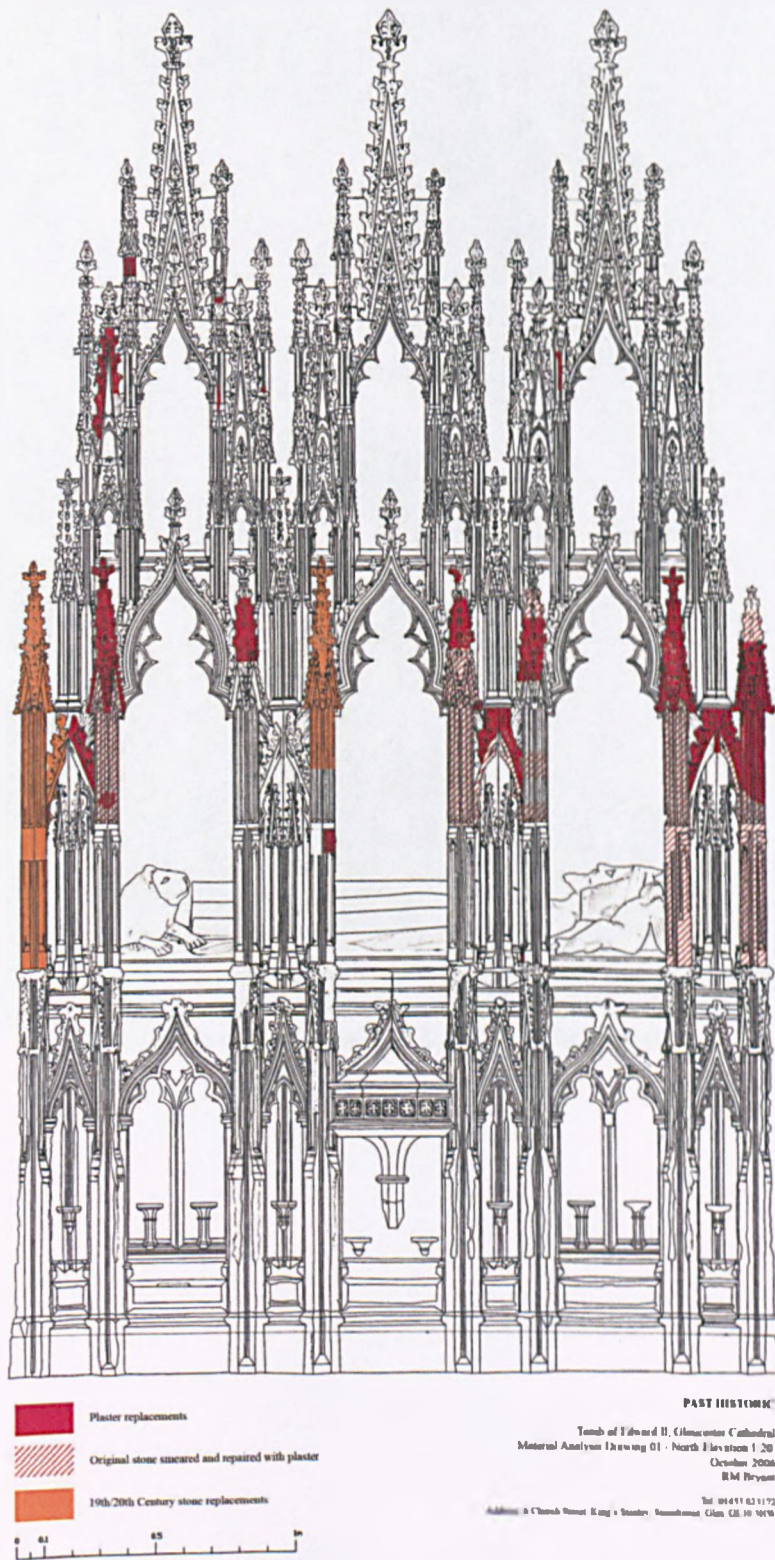**Illustration 1 - Isabella Badge**

Illustration 2 - Mothere Badge

Plaster replacements

Original stone smeared and repaired with plaster

19th/20th Century stone replacements

Illustration 3 - Scale Drawing : Tomb of Edward II

Illustration 4 : Detail of Effigy of Edward II

Illustration 5 : Possible Pilgrim Badge of Edward II

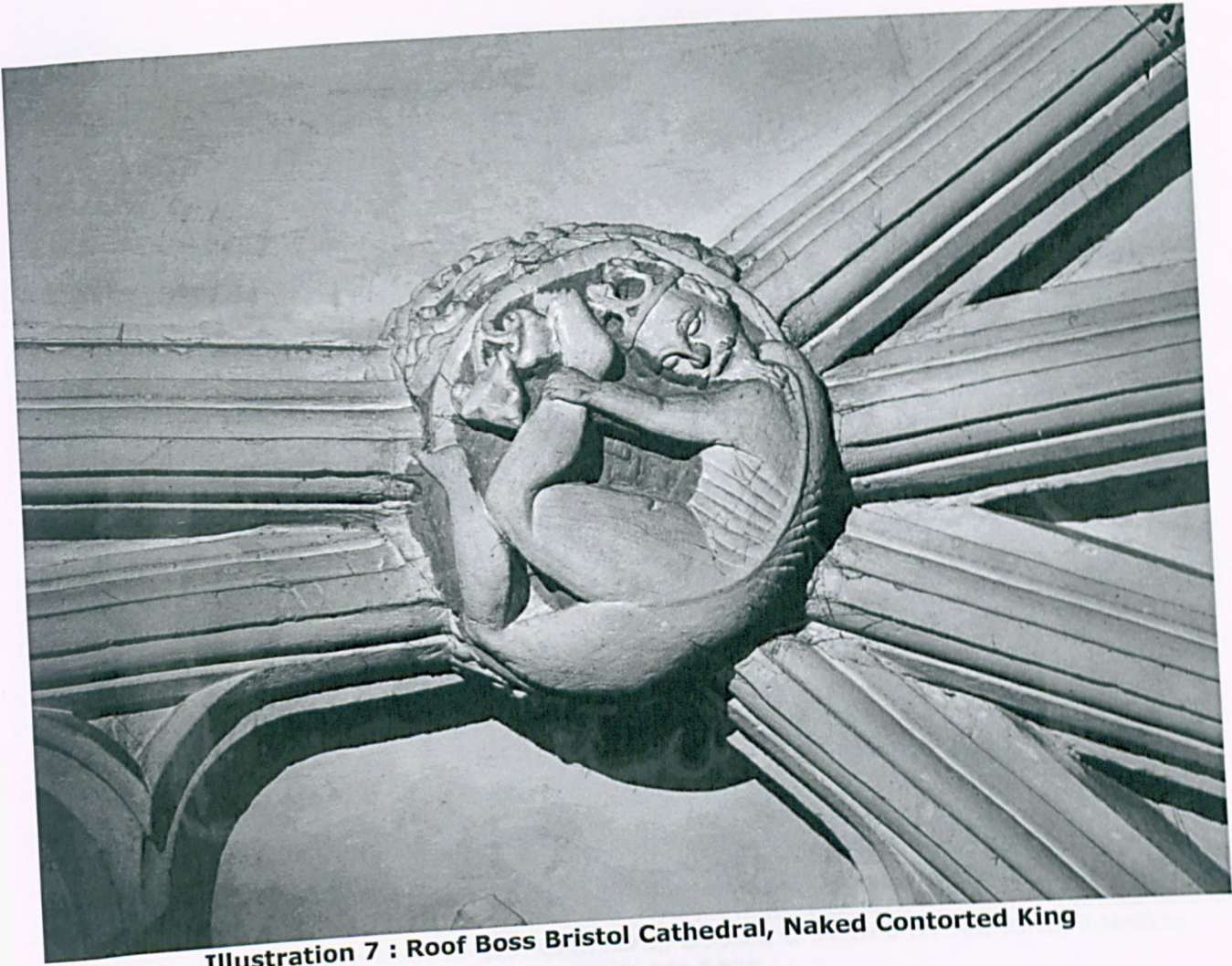**Illustration 6 : Silver Penny of Edward II**

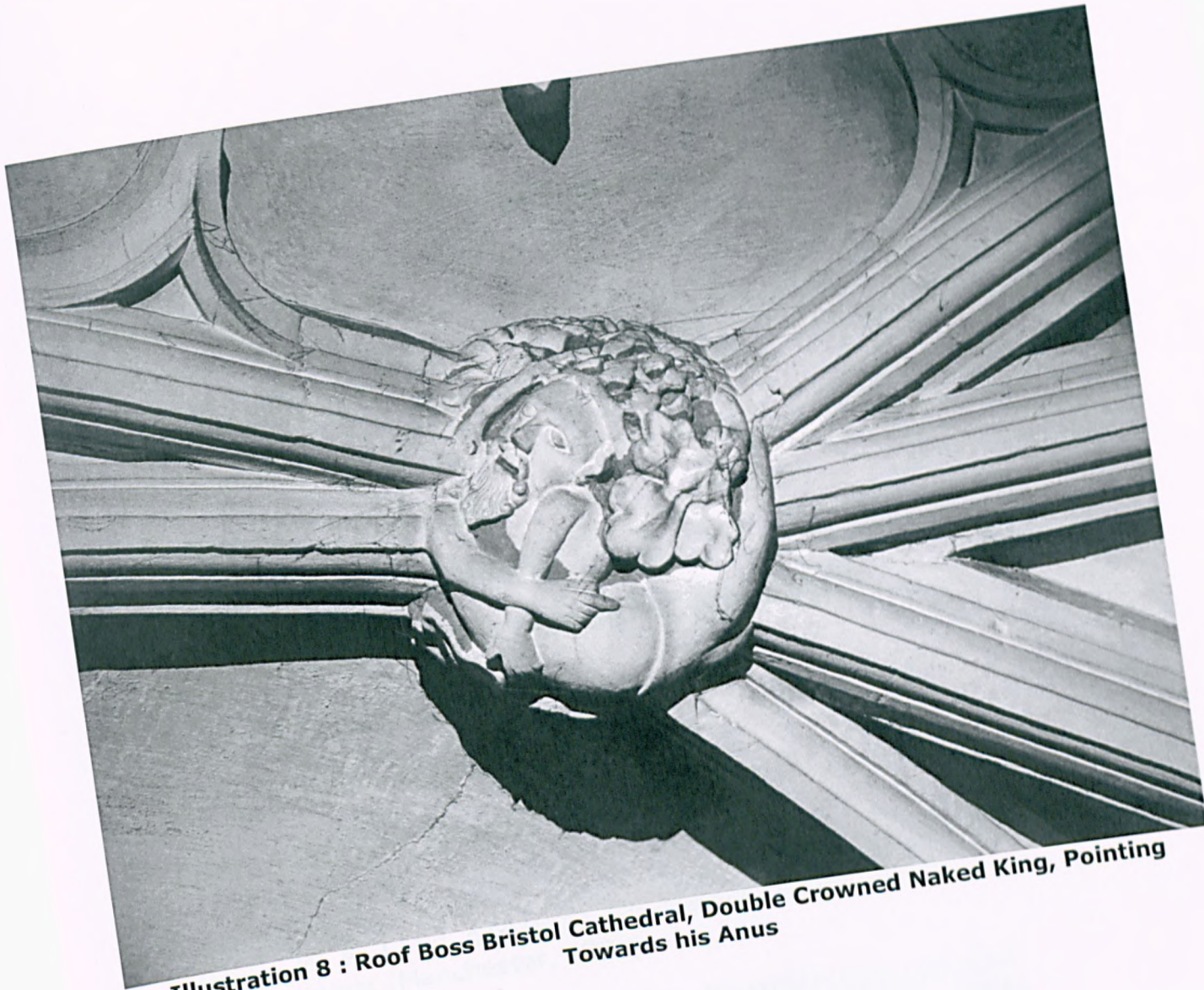Illustration 7 : Roof Boss Bristol Cathedral, Naked Contorted King

Illustration 8 : Roof Boss Bristol Cathedral, Double Crowned Naked King, Pointing Towards his Anus

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