

A 'Most Benevolent Queen' Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, her Piety and her Books.

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If Richard III is usually cast as the 'wicked uncle' of the Yorkist dynasty, it is Elizabeth Woodville who plays the 'evil queen', with able support from her rapacious Woodville relatives. Not many historians have questioned this casting,¹ but another Elizabeth is suggested by her one surviving household account,² her good works and her few surviving books, including the one work known to have been dedicated to her. All these confirm the idea that Elizabeth can be seen as a pious, responsible, fifteenth-century queen. She knew and endeavoured to realise the role and duties of her office and she was popular with many of her subjects; as a woman she suffered great changes of fortune.

Life and Reputation

This is the house of Dame Renomme or Fame ... There ben moo than a thousand entrees withoute yates and doores ... there renne tydynges ... be they of trouth or lesynge ... Ther goo and come they that fynde newe tydynges and doo nothyng but fede the wynd and the eeris of the herers. ... And in recountyng growe and encrece the fable in vayne gladnes, vayne reporte, vayne creance, ... vayn errour, vayn doute, vayn hope, vayn drede, vayn discorde and vayne murmure. (Caxton's translation of Ovid, made in 1480, *Metamorphoses*, book 12, chapter 10).

Elizabeth Woodville was one of the many children of Sir Richard Woodville and Jacquetta de Luxembourg, daughter of the Count of St Pol and widow of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France (died 1435). This marriage between a

handsome young man of no more than gentle birth and a very young and very rich, noble widow scandalised their contemporaries as much as their own daughter's second marriage was to do. The Woodville men were active supporters of the Lancastrian cause at court and in battle; it is likely that Elizabeth herself was too young ever to have been a lady in waiting to Margaret of Anjou as sometimes asserted.³ She married Sir John Grey, who was killed fighting for Lancaster at the second battle of St Albans in 1460. She was left with two young sons, Thomas and Richard, and the not unusual problem of widowhood: how to extract her lawful rights from her husband's family. In the course of these struggles against her mother-in-law and the latter's new husband, Sir John Bourchier, a son of the Yorkist Earl of Essex and uncle of Edward IV, Elizabeth enlisted the support of William, Lord Hastings, friend of the King. In early 1464 a marriage contract was made for one of her sons and a daughter of Hastings, and a secret marriage was concluded between herself and the King. By this date both her father, Lord Rivers (since 1449), and her eldest brother, Anthony, Lord Scales (in right of his wife), had also put their Lancastrian affiliations behind them and established themselves at the Yorkist court, Rivers becoming a royal councillor over a year before Elizabeth became queen.⁴

The secret marriage of the King was announced to the great council at Reading on 14 September 1464 and caused consternation, particularly to the Earl of Warwick, who was leading the negotiations for a French marriage at the time. The degree of hostility felt towards the marriage and the new English Queen is debatable; those in favour of the French negotiations were probably concerned about the effect it would have on their diplomatic efforts and others had selfish fears over the inevitable intrusion and competition of new influences on the King. The marriage was only the first of many blows that Edward was to inflict on the Earl of Warwick's hegemony.⁵

As far as Elizabeth herself was concerned, various stories circulated abroad, and probably in England, at the time. Some were worthy of inclusion in a romance, depicting the new Queen as beautiful, courageous and above all virtuous. In an Italian poem on the lives of women worthy of imitation, dedicated to Bianca Maria Sforza and written 1466-68, Elizabeth was extolled as a model of triumphantly virtuous womanhood, rewarded with a crown for her refusal to be a king's concubine.⁶ In the northern seaports it was rumoured that Edward had fallen in love with Elizabeth while dining with her frequently at her house; people said her husband was a mere knight and that he had been murdered; that the King of England could not marry a widow, only a virgin; and that he married her against everybody's wishes.⁷ However romantic or malicious these rumours were, they did not make the new English Queen unacceptable to the people of England at large; once seen on the streets of London during her pre-coronation processions her

beauty would have gained her popular favour.

Also circulating perhaps as early as the 1460s but certainly by the 1480s, was the highly-coloured story of the opposition of the King's mother, the Duchess of York, to the marriage, which found its way into the account of the events of 1483 written by the Italian/French visitor Dominic Mancini.⁸ It seems to have been Thomas More, however, who first planted the damning doubt about the twice-married Elizabeth's personal character: he said nothing specific against her but added that as the wife of Edward's enemy, Sir John Grey, she had
praised full hertly for his [Edward's] losse. In which god loved her better,
than to graunt her her bone.⁹

This innuendo was built upon with great effect by Shakespeare, and used by Elizabeth's biographers Strickland and MacGibbon to create a two-faced, untrustworthy queen.¹⁰

The immediate rewards of the Woodville family, in particular the marriages arranged for Elizabeth's siblings, are supposed to have been resented by the nobility and most of all by the Earl of Warwick. No doubt some people were indeed displeased, but others knew these marriages created valuable alliances with the King, and the King likewise knew he had gained allies and new kindred among the nobility.¹¹ The Queen's own wishes no doubt were influential, but they are unknown and it was only later historians who turned the marriages into *proof* of her personal ambition.¹²

The new Queen was crowned on 26 May 1465 and established in her own household with an income less than that enjoyed by Queen Margaret of Anjou. It is now generally accepted that Elizabeth ran a well-ordered, economic household which paid attention to financial solvency.¹³ She cannot be accused of extravagance, nor is there evidence to justify her biographers calling her 'haughty' and attributing to her an excess of personal pride. The elaborate ceremonies attached to court events in which she took part were usual at the time and do not reveal her personal wishes in any way.¹⁴

The Thomas Cook affair of 1468 has been put forward as early evidence of the Woodvilles' avaricious nature, but much of the traditional story is untrue and in particular the elements involving Elizabeth.¹⁵ Cook, a past mayor of London, was accused of treason along with many others and during the search for evidence his houses were ransacked, some goods seized into the king's hands and others purloined. The officers most involved were the treasurer of England, Lord Rivers, the Queen's father, and the treasurer of the king's household, Sir John Fogge, married to Alice Haute, a first cousin of the Queen. In the event Cook was acquitted of the full treason charge, but found guilty of concealing treasonable plots, for which he was fined 8,000 marks (£6,666 13s 4d). This was an exceptionally heavy fine, but the King was fully entitled to set it as he saw fit. By

ancient right the Queen was personally entitled to an additional ten per cent on top of such a fine, called 'queen's gold'. Cook paid the fine to the King but he negotiated over the queen's gold, and in the end was let off, no doubt partly through the good offices of his son-in-law, John Forster, Elizabeth's receiver-general since 1466. It is undoubtable that the trial of a past mayor of London created a *furor* among his chauvinist fellow citizens and made Rivers and Fogge unpopular, but it is equally unlikely that any criticism related to the Queen personally.

According to post-Yorkist accounts of this episode, however, Cook was innocent, Lord Rivers and Fogge rapacious, Lord Rivers' wife, the Duchess of Bedford, got her hands on some of the loot in the form of a valuable tapestry which she had coveted for some time (another apparent fiction), the Queen insisted on her 'gold', and as the *pièce de résistance* the Queen (or the Duchess) and Lord Rivers secured the dismissal of chief justice Markham who had advised the jury to find Cook not guilty of treason. Contemporary sources reveal only the Queen's generosity over her percentage, whatever the excessive zeal of Rivers and Fogge and the King in the governmental paranoia usual to treason trials. Markham can be shown to have tendered his own voluntary resignation six months after the Cook trial for reasons of old age and debility (he was about seventy).¹⁶ The *Great Chronicle* written by an ex-apprentice of Cook, Robert Fabian, recorded:

The Quenys Grace axid of hym viij C mark by a statute made of old tyme that ffor every ffyne soo paid unto the king ffor myspricion The Queen shuld be entytelid, of every Mⁱ li an hunderith mark [to by hir pynnys] and ffor this he was In Sute long afftyr. But by the ffavour of oon mastyr page then solycytour unto the Quene he hadde his ende, how well ther was noon opyn spech of It afftyr, ...¹⁷

The *Great Chronicle* was owned and used by John Stow for his influential and widely copied *Annales*, but Stow misread this passage and thereby created and circulated via his *Annales* the myth of the Queen's insistence on her gold. After Stow the *Great Chronicle* was in private ownership and unknown to scholars until rediscovered and printed in the 1930s.¹⁸ Through the intervening centuries the false story of Elizabeth's rapacity over her 'gold' has become well known and continues to be used with relish by her biographers.¹⁹

Equally unfounded is the story of Elizabeth's complicity in the execution of the Earl of Desmond on 14 February 1468, but here the lack of publicity for certain records has served her in a different way. This calumny is a comparatively recent addition to her misdeeds and there is again no contemporary evidence that she was involved in any way.²⁰ The story was devised too late for it to reach the ears of either Thomas More or Robert Fabian, both of whom might have enjoyed retelling it. It derives from a *mémoire* composed by the Earl of Desmond's grandson and

delivered to the privy council of Henry VIII. The Earl was imagined by his grandson as on excellent and friendly terms with Edward IV, and Elizabeth's motive for eliminating him was said to have been revenge for his advising the King to divorce her and marry a foreign princess; to achieve her own way she stole a privy seal letter authorising Desmond's execution and sent it to the Earl of Worcester, then deputy lieutenant of Ireland. This 'family' story was soon embedded in Irish chronicles, such as the late sixteenth-century 'Book of Howth', but it escaped English attention. The substance of the *mémoire* was repeated in print in 1865, the *mémoire* itself was printed in 1868 and the 'Book of Howth' in 1871, all narrowly missing Agnes Strickland's life of Elizabeth of 1864.²¹ From then on the story was widely repeated. Cora Scofield, in her life of Edward IV, was too judicious to do more than recount it as 'according to the story',²² but the author of Elizabeth's only full-length biography, David MacGibbon, accepted all the unlikely details without hesitation and used them to exemplify his heroine's method of controlling her husband!²³ P.M. Kendall muddied the waters still further by introducing Richard III's instructions to his ambassador to the next Earl of Desmond, son of the executed man, as 'confirmation' of Elizabeth's involvement. In his instructions Richard advised his ambassador to compare the killing of the Earl's father 'by persones than havynge the governaunce and rule there' to the 'semblable chaunce [similar case] ... within this royaulme of England aswele of his brother the duc of Clarence *as othe[r] his nigh[e] kinsmen and gret frendes*' (our italics). Desmond could also be told that he might now prosecute those he thought guilty by the law if he wished. There was no mention of names.²⁴ All Richard was doing, in fact, was claiming comradeship in suffering from political executions and the disasters of civil war; the likelihood that he was referring to Elizabeth as an object of prosecution is remote. Most of the important people involved were dead – although it is possible that some lesser officials were still around to answer for events of 1468 – and the new King of England was formally allowing the son to seek lawful reprisals for the death of his father while knowing the time for that had passed. Richard's instructions should be read for what they say and no more.

By 1469 the split between the Earl of Warwick and Edward over foreign policy was plain to everyone. The Burgundian alliance was in place with the marriage of Margaret of York to Charles of Burgundy and the Earl was desperate to regain control by moving the King away from his 'evil' counsellors. In July 1469 Warwick took Edward prisoner for ten weeks during which he executed several of the men about the King whom he considered most hostile to his interests, including Earl Rivers and Sir John Woodville, the Queen's father and brother, on 12 August. Shortly afterwards one of Warwick's followers seized Rivers' wife, the Duchess of Bedford, and accused her of witchcraft and making images of the King and Queen. She was eventually cleared of all charges, with the

active support of the mayor and aldermen of London to whom she had appealed.²⁵ This almost standard but extremely frightening charge against inconveniently 'powerful' or rich ladies and queens had been the means by which Henry V had mulcted Queen Joan of Navarre, the widow of his father, of her income in 1419.²⁶ It was to be used again in 1483-84 against Jacquetta (by then dead) and her daughter Elizabeth, this time on the charge of bewitching Edward IV into marriage. The accusation against Jacquetta in 1469 and the accusations against all the advisors of Edward IV in the manifestos of Warwick 1469-71 show clearly that Warwick was the main fomentor of the unpopularity of the Woodville family in public opinion.²⁷ With his defeat the creative force behind anti-Woodville propaganda was no more. The truncated family was now led by Anthony, against whose apparently mild and courtly character few had anything hostile to say, although he managed to exasperate Edward IV from time to time.²⁸ From 1473 he was tutor to his nephew, the Prince of Wales.

The next misdemeanour sometimes laid at the door of the Queen and her kin is their possible involvement in the death of the King's brother, George, Duke of Clarence. Clarence's career of treason and rebellion against Edward had started in the 1460s when he associated himself with Warwick and married Warwick's elder daughter without the King's consent. Pardonned in 1471 Clarence was unable to settle down to a more peaceful life and created new trouble after the death of his wife and infant son at the end of 1476; ascribing their deaths to poison he took the king's law into his own hands and had the suspects executed. In the next year, 1477, he conceived the idea of marrying Mary of Burgundy, the heiress of the recently killed Charles the Bold. Such an alliance would have involved England in an interminable and costly war to defend the Burgundian lands against the King of France and Edward forbade it, though some sources say that he did suggest, inconsistently, that Anthony, the Queen's brother, would be a suitable husband for Mary.

Also in 1477 a member of Clarence's household was in his turn accused of treason and indirectly attempting the death of the King and his eldest son; he was tried and executed. The Duke objected furiously, even to the extent of having a declaration of the man's innocence read, uninvited, in the royal council chamber. There were rumours of his planning another rebellion and he was arrested and finally indicted in January 1478. According to the charges Clarence had accused the King of using 'nygromancye' and being a bastard; he had made some of his men swear to be true to him and his heirs; and it was said that during the readeption of Henry VI in 1470-71 he had obtained a document promising that he would inherit the crown of England if Henry and his son should have no heirs. Edward himself played an important part in the trial and eventually parliament was satisfied that the charges were true. Clarence was condemned to death and died on

18 February 1478 under mysterious circumstances. Whether he was guilty, and if so of what exactly, is not known.²⁹

Dominic Mancini, the Italian Frenchman visiting England in 1483, was the first to blame the Woodvilles and the Queen for Clarence's downfall, repeating the rumour that Clarence had spread stories about the Queen. These stories claimed that she was not the King's legitimate wife and by spreading them Clarence had made himself into a threat to her children.³⁰ Thomas More later admitted that he did not know whether Clarence's death was due to his own ambition or to the slander of the Woodvilles, but he could not resist pointing the finger at the Queen:

... women commonly not of malice but of nature hate them whome their housebandes love ...³¹

Elizabeth's biographer, David MacGibbon, confused the various charges of sorcery of the period and claimed that Clarence accused the Queen herself of witchcraft:

Clarence probably referred to the old legend that Elizabeth's ancestors were descended from Melusine, the water-witch. Since the family of Luxembourg had actually altered their pedigree in order to claim this descent, this is by no means so unlikely as it may now appear.³²

Though the ancestral claims of the Luxembourg family to be descended from Melusine are historical³³ there is no evidence that the story was ever used by contemporaries in England against Elizabeth Woodville or her mother, Jacquetta de Luxembourg. Neither did any other contemporary or near contemporary suggest that Elizabeth or her family destroyed Clarence. Michael Hicks, in his 1980 biography of Clarence, suggested that the Woodville family and their relations by marriage were especially prominent at the court by 1478 and that their presence dominated the festivities surrounding the wedding of Edward's and Elizabeth's second son, Richard, Duke of York, to Anne Mowbray, which were held while Clarence was already in the Tower. Hicks also made a case for the Woodvilles and their supporters being 'the most powerful faction' in the parliament that judged Clarence guilty.³⁴ All that can be deduced from contemporary comments, however, is that the execution had a profound and disturbing effect; it is clear no one really knew why the King had ordered the death of his brother and that everyone had a theory. The Queen may have known her husband's precise reason, or she too may have been excluded.

Evidence for any enmity between Edward's friend and favourite, William, Lord Hastings, and the Woodvilles, especially the Queen, is very slender. The author of the Crowland Chronicle stated that after Edward's death Hastings feared that the Woodvilles would avenge themselves on him for the 'injuries allegedly done to them'. 'The great ill-will between him ... and them was indeed of long standing'. It was the intervention of the 'most benevolent Queen' that saved the situation according to the Crowland chronicler, but he does not explain the

malevolentia between Hastings and her family.³⁵ Mancini in this instance is the purveyor of genuine gossip, writing that Hastings and Thomas Grey, Marquess Dorset, Elizabeth's son, hated each other thoroughly because they had quarrelled over their mistresses.³⁶ Thomas More took this up, though without giving a reason for their enmity, and added that Elizabeth herself hated Hastings because the King favoured him and because 'shee thought hym secretye familyer with the kynge in wanton coumpanye'. More also gave a single factual reason for hatred: Edward had given the captaincy of Calais to Hastings instead of Rivers.³⁷ Inevitably factions existed at the court, but who exactly sided with whom and whether these splits were permanent is hard to establish. Every picture of the tensions and intrigues that courtiers indulged in depends ultimately on the prejudice of the commentator and the interpretation of Mancini's gossip – and his tendency to use classical literary commonplaces³⁸ – and More's innuendo. The Queen's personal role is the most uncertain factor of all.³⁹ It was also inevitable that after the death of Edward IV any opposition to the Woodvilles would increase and past calumnies, whether genuine or alleged, would be reiterated.⁴⁰

Another slur on Elizabeth's character and one calculated to suggest she lost the affection and respect of her husband seems to have been largely the creation of P.M. Kendall, a consistently harsh critic of the Woodvilles of whom Elizabeth is presented as the 'greediest and most wilful'.⁴¹ In 1475 Elizabeth had been appointed one of the nine executors of the will made by Edward IV before he left for France, with appropriately affectionate phraseology: '... straitly charging thaim and especially oure derrest wiff in whom we moost singularly put oure trust in this partie ...'.⁴² Edward's will of 1483 does not survive and a complete list of his executors appointed then is not known; some of those named in 1475 had since died. Elizabeth, of course, took to sanctuary and could not participate in any of the business transacted after 30 April; one reference to their activities which mentions names concerns a meeting on 7 May about the costs of the King's funeral when the archbishop of Canterbury sequestered the late King's goods in his role as supervisor of the will.⁴³ Because Elizabeth was not present at this May meeting, Kendall declared that Elizabeth had been 'dropped' from the second will by her husband, but there is no evidence to support this assertion.⁴⁴ Both common sense and a sense of the correct procedure would have dictated that the Queen, mother of the new King, be accorded the courtesy and duties of executorship in 1483 as she had been in 1475.

The duplicity of the 'stage character' in which Elizabeth Woodville made her later appearances seems to derive mainly from Sir Thomas More's innuendo, but it is also the creation of later uncharitable and uninformed commentators who have criticised her successive actions, though these were clearly forced upon her by circumstances: first her inevitable accommodation with Richard III, secondly her

supposed involvement in plots to marry her eldest daughter to Henry Tudor, and lastly the part she is said to have played in the plots surrounding Lambert Simnel. Most writers' narratives are largely imagined, as there is no evidence for her actions and no indication that she had any freedom to manoeuvre in a political world of male decisions made without reference to her wishes. The tone of the narratives has usually been dictated by the writer's stance: pro-Tudor, pro-York or pro-Richard III. Elizabeth herself is rarely given credit for the impossible and unpleasant situation she found herself in after the death of Edward IV.⁴⁵ A contributory factor to this image of duplicity and changeableness has been her apparently silent endurance of her husband's many infidelities. The contemporary silence surrounding her reaction to them has been taken as evidence for an 'apparent freedom from jealousy, the consequence of cold affection and prudent calculation'⁴⁶ – both her refusal to be the king's mistress *and* her apparent acceptance of her husband's liaisons are thus turned against her. An imaginative biographer like Agnes Strickland, in 1864, could easily create an elaborate picture of Elizabeth's constant and 'potent' control over Edward IV's mind,

an influence most dangerous in the hands of a woman who possessed more cunning than firmness, more skill in concocting a diplomatic intrigue than power to form a rational resolve. She was ever successful in carrying her own purposes, but she had seldom a wise or good end in view ... Elizabeth gained her own way with her husband by an assumption of the deepest humility; her words were soft and caressing, her glances timid.⁴⁷

The last sentence was taken over verbatim, without acknowledgement, by her next biographer, David MacGibbon in 1936.⁴⁸ Charles Ross' description of her, in 1971, is damning and uses even her reputed beauty against her:

Elizabeth had nothing to recommend her except her obvious physical attractions. Her rather cold beauty was not offset by any warmth or generosity of temperament. She was to prove a woman of designing character, grasping and ambitious for her family's interests, quick to take offence and reluctant to forgive'.⁴⁹

Contemporary reaction to Elizabeth by someone who knew or who had even met her is rare. She can be seen as the gracious hostess to Louis de Gruuthuse, Edward's host in exile, in 1472, together with her daughters and husband in a description written by Bluemantle Pursuivant, but that only indicates her social accomplishments and not her character.⁵⁰ In contrast to Mancini's vivid anti-Woodville stories picked up from unknown, but presumably non-conciliar informants, the only other contemporary writer, the author of the second continuation of the *Crowland Chronicle*, who may have moved in the circle of the royal council, has nothing but dignified praise for the Queen. She is mentioned only once and she is depicted neither as an originator of nor participant in events or

plots, but intervening to keep the peace in the quarrelling council in the aftermath of Edward's death and before Edward V came to London; she is described as the most benevolent ... queen (*benignissima ... regina*), who wished to quench every spark of discord.⁵¹ Taking this discreet but contemporary adjective as a guideline, the following description of her public image, her piety and her culture is offered.

A 'Most Benevolent Queen': Popularity and Public Image.

Perhaps most important in the eyes of her subjects and her husband Elizabeth excelled at the one task all men allowed women: childbearing. During Edward's first reign she had borne Elizabeth in 1466, Mary in 1467, and Cecily in 1469. During the King's exile the Prince of Wales, Edward, was born in Westminster Sanctuary, November 1470. The Queen's role as expectant mother and then mother of his male heir surrounded by her husband's enemies in sanctuary may have been uncomfortable and anxious, but it probably secured, or resecured, her a popularity among Londoners comparable to that achieved by her 'romantic' marriage: for Yorkist Londoners she suffered with them. The dedication to her of a London poem (see below) celebrating Edward's return and the Londoners' victory at their own gates over the Bastard of Fauconberg in which her eldest brother played a conspicuous part, underlines her popularity at this time. Children continued to be born regularly through the second reign: Margaret in April 1472, a second son, Richard, in August 1473, and Anne in November 1475. George was born November 1477, Katherine early 1479 and Bridget, her last child, in November 1480.⁵² In this female role and queenly duty no one could criticise Elizabeth Woodville.

There is certainly evidence that not only was Elizabeth not as bad as she has been painted but that she also adopted the intercessory role expected of earthly queens in imitation of the merciful Queen of Heaven. As the Virgin Mary was increasingly depicted in the robes of secular queenship in the fifteenth-century this 'identification' was almost impossible to avoid.⁵³ In her testament Elizabeth herself gave Mary the title of 'oure blessed Lady Quene of comforte'.⁵⁴ One only has to remember the famous intervention by Philippa of Hainault, Queen of Edward III, to save the burghers of Calais from their apparently inevitable death, and the more formalised role of Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard II, in the great pageant staged to celebrate that King's pardon of the city of London, to realise how accepted this intercessory model had become.⁵⁵ In 1471 a London poet also begged Elizabeth herself to 'Helpe every man to have justice' (see below). Evidence for two cases in which she was involved survive: as pointed out above, in 1468 she did not insist on her right to queen's gold, a surcharge on the heavy fine on Sir Thomas Cook.⁵⁶ In the 1480s she showed herself equally willing to take the part of other

Londoners, the Merchant Adventurers' Company, who were seeking to reduce the large sum which the King claimed they had defrauded or withheld from his customs; the Queen's intercession with the King secured them a rebate of 1000 marks.⁵⁷

The most charming evidence of Elizabeth's place in Londoners' affections and of her role as queen comes from a poem, composed by a Londoner in 1471, thanking God with enthusiasm for Edward IV's recovery of the throne, with a refrain varying the phrase 'Lord thy will be doo'.⁵⁸ He is mostly concerned with the victory at Barnet and the Londoners' successful repelling of the attacks led by the Bastard of Fauconberg on London Bridge, Aldgate and Bishopsgate shortly after Edward's departure for the west to meet the second Lancastrian army. The author was certainly in London during these weeks but he does not appear to have taken an active part in the events. He briefly recounts the main points of Edward's journey through England from Holderness (8 verses), the itinerary perhaps derived from a copy of Edward's memoir of the events sent to Charles of Burgundy.⁵⁹ He lingers over Edward's reception in London and Westminster and over his reunion with his Queen and his new heir (3 verses): the Queen, once more surrounded by her menfolk, must be the happiest of women, 'o blessed creature'. The poet spends ten verses on the battle of Barnet but these mainly consist of Edward's pious exhortations to the Holy Trinity, Our Lady and Saints Edward, Anne, John and George, and give no real military details. The most striking section is the sign of victory given to Edward:

... shone a ster over his hede full bryghte
The sight of the wiche made his enemyes wo;
It was a tokyn of victory ...

Eleven verses describe the defence of the city in a slightly more circumstantial and knowledgeable way; there is enthusiastic praise for Earl Rivers' share in the defence:

He purchesid grett love of the comyns that seasoun
and more measured praise for the Earl of Essex and eight unnamed aldermen.⁶¹
There follows an account of Edward's victory procession through London with no reference to the battle of Tewkesbury at all; a bias that indicates surely the author's London perspective. Praise is given in particular to Richard of Gloucester, the 'husband of Fortune', who is compared to Hector, and to Hastings.

... that gentill knyghte
Which failid his mayster nother in storm ne stoure.⁶²

The procession ended at St Paul's and the poem ends with three verses addressed to the Queen celebrating her happy issue from her troubles:

O queene Elizabeth, O blessid creature,
O glorius God, what payne had sche?

What langowr and angwiche did sche endure?
When hir lorde and sovereyn was in adversité.
To here of hir wepyng it was grett peté,
When sche remembirde the kyngé, sche was woo.
Thus in every thyngé the wille of God is doo.

Here aftir, good lady, in your felicité,
Remembir olde trowblis and thynges paste,
And thyncke that Cryste hym selfe is hee
That is kyngé or kynges, and ever shall laste.
Knytt in youre herte suerly and faste,
And thyncke he hathe delyveryd you owte of woo;
Hertly thoncke hym, plesith hym so to doo.

And ever, good lady, for the love of Jhesu,
And his blessid modir in any wise,
Remembir suche personus as have be trewe,
Helpe every man to have justice.
And thes that wille othir maner maters device,
Thay love not the kyngé, I dar say soo,
Besechyng ever God that his wille be doo.⁶³

Elizabeth was now free to resume the queen's recommended womanly role of helping the deserving to reward and justice in pious imitation of the Queen of Heaven. The final address to Elizabeth in the poem is almost unexpected after the martial exploits of Barnet and the defence of London, but the text is above all a celebration of a 'family' overcoming troubles and being reunited with God's help. The unknown poet was obviously a fervent Yorkist and one of those Londoners greatly moved by the Queen's plight as an expectant mother surrounded by her husband's enemies: 'To here of her wepyng it was grett pité'. Londoners who had acted on their emotions and given her succour in the form of supplies were later rewarded.⁶⁴ Above all she was seen as one of them and sharing in their trials; as the poet put it,

... what vexacioun was then
To the quene and the lordis and other lades eke,
To the mayre, and the comens, and the aldurmen;⁶⁵

London's ruling class had been positively Yorkist since June 1460⁶⁶ and whatever complaints some of them, such as Cook, may have had acquired against Edward they remained so throughout the 1460s and the crisis of 1470-71, circumventing the supporters of Warwick and Lancaster and opening the gates to Edward. Warwick may have been more popular with the lower orders; certainly his efforts to make more influential citizens support Henry VI and pro-French policies failed.⁶⁷ The attack on London by his kinsman, Fauconberg, did not help

Warwick's reputation with the citizens. On the other hand the Queen's brother, Anthony, gained new popularity by his involvement in London's defence. It should be remembered in this context that the mayor and aldermen had supported their mother, Jacquetta, in her hour of need when she was accused of sorcery by Warwick's agents in 1469; Londoners had special reason for being grateful to Jacquetta because she had been one of the ladies who had gone out to plead with Margaret of Anjou not to attack London when Warwick's defeat at the second battle of St Albans in 1460 had left London undefended.⁶⁸

This time of notable Woodville popularity on all sides deserves to be remembered when the other calumnies are rehearsed too often. The unknown London poet was not alone in his sentiments as regards the Queen. The speaker of the Commons later talked in similar vein of the Queen's 'womandy behavvour' and 'grete constans'.⁶⁹ She had enacted *par excellence* the ideal role of a suffering, uncomplaining and totally passive woman and was at last rewarded with the victory of her husband – even better she had given birth to his live male heir.

The poem survives in one copy, in British Library, Royal 17 D xv, ff. 327-332v. This manuscript contains several texts: the *Canterbury Tales*, partly written in the hand of John Multon, a prosperous stationer of Paternoster Row, London, who died in 1475; the *Somnium Vigilantis*; Sir John Fortescue's *Declaration*, giving up his old opinions against the Yorkist succession; and a copy of the *Book of Nurture*.⁷⁰ All these items are in different hands but they are all on paper with the same watermark; it is possible therefore that they were all made for the same London stationer, John Multon, in the 1470s and sold in his shop near St Paul's.⁷¹ If this is the case the poem was obtainable by London citizens in one of the busiest booksellers' streets in London and in one of the busiest of its shops.

Elizabeth also played her part in the public eye in various pageants organised in her honour. The organisers made great efforts to greet her appropriately and learnedly, introducing saints and biblical and historical figures whom they knew were of particular interest to her. Some days before her coronation, on 24 May 1465, she made a magnificent entry into London across the bridge from Southwark; the record of the expenses incurred on this occasion give some details of her crossing the thoroughfare of the bridge's shops and houses.⁷² The bridge was prepared and decorated the night before by carpenters and other workmen using great quantities of coloured papers, buckram and paint: red, blue, green, white and purple. The roadway of the bridge had been sanded and fumigated. Elizabeth was welcomed by clerks singing at the 'staple' of the bridge and again by a choir of boys at the door of the chapel of St Thomas. There was a pageant of eight 'images' including the Holy Spirit, St Paul, London's patron saint, who made a speech of welcome, St Elizabeth, her own name saint, who also addressed her, and Mary Cleophas, the

twice-married sister of the Virgin Mary, another direct compliment to the Queen.⁷³ There were angels with hair of flax dyed with saffron and wings made out of 600 peacocks' feathers. The Queen was presented with six ballads composed in her honour and copied and decorated by John Genycote, which had also been posted up on tables for everybody to see and read. The full cost to the Bridge House Estate was £21 14s 6½d.

In 1469 Elizabeth and her young daughters (her third daughter had been born in March) visited Norwich on or near 13 July and stayed for about a month. Edward had already been to the city in June while touring the shires of East Anglia. The city's officials made careful and elaborate plans for Elizabeth's reception keeping messengers posted to inform them of her precise progress; they engaged a John Powell of Ipswich known for his skills at pageants; and they repaired civic amenities. At Westwick Gates the Queen was greeted by the major and aldermen and a pageant which featured two giants, patriarchs, the apostles and sixteen virgins, with the Archangel Gabriel making a speech. Another pageant showed the Visitation of the Virgin Mary to St Elizabeth, obviously chosen very specifically for the Queen; a speech was made, clerks sang and there was organ music. At the Black Friars, where the Queen was to lodge, she sat in the great chair of the fraternity of St Luke to watch a performance by Mr Fakke and his boys, but it was interrupted by heavy rain and she went early to her lodgings. The Queen's visit to Norwich seems to have been extended because of the troubles in Lincolnshire; she left for London on being told the news of the executions of her father and brother, John, at Warwick's orders (12 August).⁷⁴

In April 1474 the Queen visited Coventry, accompanying her son, the three-year old Prince of Wales. Here, too, she was welcomed by an elaborate pageant of royal ancestors and saintly protectors, among them the Three Kings of Cologne who prayed God to preserve the Prince and announced:⁷⁵

Of on of us three lynally, we fynde,

His Nobull Modr, queene Elizabeth, ys comyn of that kynde

This is presumably a confused reference to the complicated, mythical and elevated ancestry of the Luxembourg family of Elizabeth's mother, which included kings of Cyprus, Armenia and Bohemia.⁷⁶

The Queen's Books.

It was laid down what kind of books women were expected to like and queens were no more free of this instruction than other women: devotional works were their main reading matter.⁷⁷ William Caxton set out a realistic version of male expectations and advice with his usual aplomb in his prologue explaining the benefits of reading his new romance, *Blanchardin and Eglantine*. While waiting faithfully for their menfolk to return from the wars, ladies would learn constancy

from stories of valiant deeds *and* from devotional literature. Caxton feared they might even read *too much* of the latter:

it is as requesyte other whyle to rede in aunycnt hystories of noble fayttes and valyaunt actes of armes and warre ... to see and knowe their valyauntnes for to stande in the specyall grace and love of their ladyes, and in lyke wyse for gentyl yonge ladyes and damoysellys for to lerne to be stedfaste and constaunt in their parte to theym that they ones have promysed and agreed to, ... as it is to occupye theyme and studye overmoche in bokes of contemplacion.⁷⁸

Elizabeth's few surviving books reflect this practical advice. It is sad that so few of the books associated with her can, after examination, still be definitely linked to her: some of the associations were and are based on genuinely ambiguous evidence that is unlikely to be resolved and some of them were the product of wishful thinking.⁷⁹

It is certain that the Queen bought and owned expensive books, because in her one surviving household account, of 1466-67, £10 was spent on a book (unspecified) bought through a Master Wulflete of the University of Cambridge.⁸⁰ Her husband is known to have purchased a number of magnificent books from the Low Countries, but it can be only speculated whether she was responsible for ordering some of the few, attractive but less impressive, surviving books in the Royal Library collection that date from the Yorkist period.⁸¹

Superficially the most important book associated with Elizabeth is a large vellum volume (19 by 13¼ inches) of romances in French prose, handsomely written in three columns and illuminated in the early fourteenth century.⁸² In Elizabeth's day it contained two of the three parts of the French prose *Lancelot*, written 1215-30, with its 'prologue'; the *Estoire del Saint Graal*, composed at a later date and dealing with the story of Joseph of Arimathea and the origins of the Grail and its long line of keeper-kings; and a stray story from the Tristram cycle written on paper. The prose *Lancelot* was one of the greatest and most influential of the Arthurian cycles. It consisted of three parts: the first was the *Lancelot* which told of his early life, his discovery of his parentage, his love for Queen Guinevere, unsullied by criticism, his installation as knight of the Round Table, and finally the tragedy of the death of Galehot; second the *Queste del Saint Graal*, a spiritual quest in which three knights, including Lancelot's son, Galahad, are successful, but in which Lancelot fails because of his relationship with the queen; and third, the *Mort Artu*, dealing with the destruction of the Arthurian world depicted as a direct result of the adulterous passion between Lancelot and Guinevere.⁸³ We are indebted for the knowledge of what the book contained in Elizabeth's day to Sir Richard Roos (died 1482) who wrote a list of contents, now partly erased, on a flyleaf, (f. 2v):

The begynnyng of the first boke of sangrealle endureth to the ende of the
iiij^mviiij lefe this sig[ne; rest erased] <[an]d endureth to the commyng in
of [L]auncelot>

And after that the boke of Tristram and launcelot [a word erased] ben the
boke of paper [and] the olde boke of parchment and after the mort darthur
where of the begynnyng ys yn this same boke and [beginneth] at [rest
erased].

Cest livre est a moy [Richard Roos; a third word lost]⁸⁴

The prologue of the story of the Grail still opens the volume: the *Estoire* concerning Joseph of Arimathea and his journeys (ff. 3-88v); the last few 'paragraphs' are missing. The volume no longer has 'the boke of paper', which was presumably part of the long French prose *Tristan* and was probably removed by some later owner who found the text on paper incongruous among the illuminated vellum pages of Lancelot and the Grail. The next Lancelot story, the *Queste* (ff. 89-139v), follows, as it did when Sir Richard saw it. Lastly there survives the *Mort Artu* (ff. 140-61v), also in a version that lacks its last section. Sir Richard Roos died in March 1482, his will being proved on 2 April. He bequeathed his 'grete booke called saint Grall bounde in boordes coverde with rede leder and plated with plates of laten' to his niece, Eleanor Haute, wife of Sir Richard Haute;⁸⁵ it seems likely that this bequest concerned this book. Eleanor wrote in it in her turn (f. 162): 'thys boke ys myne dame alyanor haute'.

The ownership of Elizabeth Woodville is suggested by the signature *E Wydevyll'* followed by a flourished stroke in a fifteenth-century hand in an unobtrusive position on the last flyleaf (f. 162). The other candidate for this signature is obviously her brother, Edward (died 1488).⁸⁶ If it is Elizabeth then she must have written it before 1465, when she became queen, and possibly before she became the wife of John Grey. After she became queen she signed herself *Elysabeth*, both before 1483 and after.⁸⁷ Support appears to be lent to the idea that the Queen was the *E Wydevyll'* in question by the inscription in a single hand – possibly that of the young Elizabeth of York – of *elysabeth the kyngys dowther* and *cecyl the kyngys dowther* at the beginning of the book (f. 1). The repeated signature of *Jane grey* (ff. 1, 162) provides additional support for Woodville interest (though not ownership) as this Jane must be identified as Elizabeth's (and Edward's) sister, Jane or Joan, who married Anthony Grey de Ruthin, heir of the earl of Kent (died 1480), and who died 1491.⁸⁸

It could be argued that the book was in Elizabeth Woodville's ownership before she married anyone and remained with her into the 1470s or 1480s, when it attracted the attention of her two eldest daughters long enough for them to put in their names, but the evidence indicates that it was owned by Roos until 1482, and after that for a while at least by Eleanor Haute. If the latter scenario is correct the

manuscript was merely filled with doodles by members of the Woodville family. It was an old-fashioned, even archaic book, by this time; there were plenty of newer copies of French romances available for princesses with larger and more modern and realistic pictures. Elizabeth may have given it to Sir Richard Roos before she married; he was a poet and a man of literary tastes who was genuinely interested in its contents;⁸⁹ he may have made the notes in the margins on the ancestry of Lancelot, Galahad and Gawain (ff. 84v, 87, 88), a subject of some importance to the story.⁹⁰ It is possible that Eleanor Haute gave the book to Elizabeth's daughters after April 1482 and while they could still call themselves the king's daughters, that is before April 1483; their names are very prominent in the book. The Queen would not have signed herself as anything but *Elysabeth* at this time.⁹¹

Elizabeth's other book of stories – romances in our estimation but possibly history in hers – is a copy of Caxton's translation of the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* containing the unique engraving of Caxton presenting his work to Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, Elizabeth's sister-in-law. The book bears a mysterious inscription by Thomas Shukburgh,⁹² written in one, very neat, late fifteenth-century hand:

This boke is mine quene elizabet late wiffe unto the
moste noble king edwarde the forthe off whose
bothe soolis y be seche almyghty Gode Take
Take⁹³ to his onfynyght mercy above. Amen.

Per me Thomam
Shukburgh juniozem

It is likely this is a *copy* of the original *ex libris*: *This boke is mine, quene elizabet* to which Thomas Shukburgh *added* his own explanation and prayer, confusing the issue by writing it all in one hand and without any pause or punctuation. Thomas came of a prominent Warwickshire family; several members were in royal service.⁹⁴ No other signs of ownership remain in the book. Elizabeth's ownership may be confirmed by the presence of the now unique, high-quality presentation 'miniature' of Caxton and Margaret of York.⁹⁵

Another Caxton edition which can be connected to Elizabeth is the *Jason*, the story of the conquest of the Golden Fleece, which the printer presented to the young Prince of Wales, by the King's 'licence and congye and by the supportacion of our most redoubted liege lady, most excellent princesse the Quene'.⁹⁶ It is likely Elizabeth took some notice of the contents of a book dedicated to her son.⁹⁷

As regards her religious texts again very little is known with certainty. No book of hours survives for her, except for an almost unique *Hours of the Guardian Angel* which may have been presented to her at her request. This small volume contains a presentation scene showing a woman presenting the book to a crowned queen and a dedicatory poem in English addressed to a 'Sovereign Princess' with

an acrostic 'Elisabeth'. The decoration of the book has been dated to Elizabeth Woodville's reign. Apart from the need of any queen for a guardian angel, and especially a queen who had already experienced such fluctuations of fortune, there is little direct evidence to connect Elizabeth with the fifteenth-century cult of All Angels, or the Guardian Angel in particular, except for this little book. The cult of angels was generally popular, however, and a well known chapel with a fraternity and hospital dedicated to the Virgin Mary and All Angels near Syon Abbey and the royal palace of Shene cannot have escaped Queen Elizabeth's attention. It certainly attracted the attention of some of her servants, officials of the duchy of Lancaster – from which her income was mainly derived – and the Exchequer, and of leading lawyers and citizens of the city of London. It may have been the wife or mother of one of these who presented this Hours to the Queen. Precise evidence of a connection between the Queen herself and this chapel is lacking nor can the donor be identified with certainty, but the name of a woman who was closely involved in this fraternity of All Angels and who had both links with Queen Elizabeth Woodville and with an important literary and pious circle, can be provided. Joan Luyt and Thomas, her husband, were members of a community living at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, some of whom were noted for their interest in devotional literature and book production. Thomas was Elizabeth Woodville's attorney from 1466, and both he and his wife joined the fraternity of All Angels. As a widow, in 1487-90, Joan took control of its chapel. She may actually be the soberly dressed lady kneeling in the charming presentation miniature before the enthroned queen, offering the little book. If the statement in the dedicatory poem preceding the miniature is precisely true and the 'sovereign princess' did request a copy of the text, then Elizabeth's taste in devotional literature may have been both positive and sophisticated.⁹⁸

Unfortunately the only other devotional text that is sometimes said to have belonged to Elizabeth must be rejected. It has been claimed that it belonged to her when she had taken sanctuary in Westminster Abbey in 1483 and that she passed it on to her daughter Elizabeth of York. It is a thirteenth-century missal of which only twenty-one leaves survive, containing the texts for the vigil of the Saturday before Easter and for the vigil of Pentecost.⁹⁹ At the end was added, in a later hand, an extended *Absolutio in extremis*, absolution for the dying from all sentences of excommunication, from all sins committed, confessed and even forgotten, and, as far as possible, from punishment in purgatory.¹⁰⁰ In the margins of some pages of the manuscript occur scribbles in two (?) very late fifteenth or early sixteenth-century hands, which together appear to make a mysterious code, but are more likely to be pen trials without much meaning.¹⁰¹ They must have been made in 1485 at the earliest, but are more likely to be sixteenth-century; they indicate a link with Westminster Abbey. As this is a liturgical text, not intended for the personal use of

laymen, it probably had a clerical owner.¹⁰²

One of the most suitable texts for women, combining devotion with pleasant narrative and the highest examples of womanhood, occurs in one other manuscript, made about 1470, that could be associated with Elizabeth Woodville: a *Life of Our Lady* by John Lydgate (covering the period from her own birth to the birth of Christ). A late fifteenth-century note in the book reads:

thys boke yeven to the quene our souereyne lady ffor to se the
converssacyon [life] off our moost blessed lady off hevyn ffor to conffort
and to passe tyme in redyng and ovyr seyng thys lytyll trety off hyr
blessed.

The manuscript bears the motto *aymer et a tandyr* (to love and to wait).¹⁰³ Both text and motto are almost too pat a realisation of the public and recommended role of queen and wife. The Virgin Mary provided the ultimate example of female humility and obedience – she was also their most reliable protector and the ever merciful intercessor for the guilty penitent, male or female, with her Son and the Father. Plenty of women owned copies of her *Life* and texts of her *Miracles*.¹⁰⁴

A ‘Most Benevolent Queen’: Piety and Public Image.

Queens like Elizabeth Woodville would have known very well what was expected of them and how they were to behave in order to fulfill the expectations of their husband and male public. Often their fortunes depended on it, but even when they played their role to perfection it did not ensure a comfortable old age, as the careers of all fifteenth-century English queens who survived their husbands amply demonstrate. Elizabeth’s request for a copy of the hours of the Guardian Angel may have been just such a public-conscious and gracious act, but it also showed an awareness of how much a queen needed every assistance that such an angel could offer.

While she was queen Elizabeth extended her patronage to proper pious objects. If a medieval chronicler had recorded her life he would certainly have listed the religious establishments she had founded, built or rebuilt, and the pilgrimages she had undertaken. No one did Elizabeth that service, but John Rous of Warwick undertook the task for her husband. He listed Edward’s repair and enlargements of the Garter Chapel at Windsor, his acquisition of relics for the same chapel, notably the head of St George, and his purchase of indulgences for it. Rous also recorded that Edward gave the Friars Observantines land in Kent, with a chapel of the Holy Cross at Greenwich; whether the Queen played an active part is not said, nor are any of her own foundations and activities mentioned by him.¹⁰⁵

Elizabeth was involved in religious foundations from the very beginning of her reign, for on 12 July 1466 the city of London agreed that she should have a piece of land at Tower Hill, next to the Postern, on which to build a chapel or college as

she thought best. Nothing else is known of this mysterious foundation.¹⁰⁶ Before 1479 she had founded a chapel of St Erasmus, next to the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey, and endowed a two-priest chantry there for the royal family. St Erasmus (also called St Elmo) was the protector of sailors and women in childbirth and this foundation may well be connected with Elizabeth's stay in Westminster sanctuary in the winter of 1470-71, when she gave birth to her first son and awaited the return of her husband who was in exile overseas.¹⁰⁷

From 1467 she was lady of the manor of Shene in which the great charterhouse was situated, so it was natural she should take a particular interest in that house and the observances of that order, but it is also possible that she admired the self-effacing and unwordly devotional life of the Carthusians. In 1477 she obtained a licence to attend their services at all the houses of the order that had been founded by kings or queens of England.¹⁰⁸ In 1479 she granted the new prior of Sheen, John Ingelby, a member of the Yorkshire family which had played a leading part in the foundation of Mount Grace Charterhouse, forty-three acres from her manor for her life, a grant which Edward elevated to a grant in perpetuity the next month. The relationship between Ingelby and Elizabeth seems to have been or become close: he was the leader of her executors and it may have been his devotional austerity that informed the piety of her last years.¹⁰⁹

Like Margaret of Anjou before her, Elizabeth adopted the role of benefactress to Queens' College, Cambridge; she has some claims to be *the* foundress of the College as she was the donor of its first statutes.¹¹⁰ Elizabeth was also a generous benefactor of Henry VI's foundation, Eton College: she visited it, with Edward, three times in 1471 and made gifts to it, while her brother, Anthony, gave it land.¹¹¹ For the benefit of her own and her family's estate while alive and her own soul after death she took part in many pilgrimages, in particular to Canterbury: she went with the King in July 1465, with the young Princess Elizabeth in 1470 and again with the King in September 1471; the last occasion was an especially elaborate affair.¹¹²

She also cared for the spiritual well-being of her subjects in the way most deeply appreciated by her contemporaries: she secured the King's licence for a fraternity of the Holy Trinity which aimed to support sixty priests at Leadenhall in the city of London;¹¹³ and she supplicated the pope for special indulgences for her subjects. In 1480/1 when the celebration of the new feast of the Visitation (2 July) threatened to overshadow two other important feasts observed in England near the same date the pope granted on the Queen's request that people could say the necessary devotions of the new feast in private and nevertheless secure the full indulgences. At the same time the pope allowed special indulgences to those who would kneel and devoutly say the Angelical Salutation (*Ava Maria, gratia plena ...*) three times a day, 'seeing that the queen desires the devotion of the faithful of the

realm for the said Salutation to be increased ...'.¹¹⁴ To Elizabeth as to many of her contemporaries the feasts of the Virgin were of particular importance. Her 'singular devotion to the feast of the Visitation', which celebrated the pregnancies of both the Virgin and St Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist and the Queen's namesake, is mentioned in the papal letter; in 1477 the pope had already granted seven years of indulgences to all who visited the church of the Austin friars in Huntingdon, to which the Queen was also devoted, on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady (15 August).¹¹⁵

Elizabeth like the rest of her family and household, was aware of the benefits of prayer and of being a member of fraternities which existed to support prayers; she became a sister of the fraternities of the Holy Trinity, Luton, the Assumption of the Virgin of the London Skinners, of Christchurch Cathedral Canterbury, and perhaps of the fraternity of the Virgin Mary and the Nine Orders of Angels by Syon.¹¹⁶ With her husband she took an active interest in Syon Abbey, the Bridgettine house which had been one of greatest expressions of devotion and patronage of the house of Lancaster and which the Yorkists took over in a most deliberate way. Edward was regarded as the second founder of the house because he restored much of its property.¹¹⁷ One of the prophetic texts written by the foundress of the Order, St Bridget of Sweden, was appropriated by Edward for political reasons, as it emphasised the necessity of the rightful heir succeeding to his inheritance to save his kingdom from destruction.¹¹⁸ In 1480 Edward and Elizabeth christened their last daughter, Bridget, in recognition of their devotion to the saint and her general popularity.¹¹⁹

Elizabeth's last years spent outside Henry VII's court and her residence in Bermondsey Abbey, a house of the Cluniac order, meant that she had little need to write more than a very short will.¹²⁰ She had 'no wordely goods to do the Quenes Grace, my derest daughter, a pleasur with, nether to reward any of my children, according to my hart and mynde', so she left them her blessing. Her executors were clergy, all of whom had known Elizabeth a long time, with her daughter, the Queen, and her sole surviving son, Thomas Grey, Marquess of Dorset, to assist. John Ingelby, the prior of Shene Charterhouse, a man of known austerity, who had been in office since 1478-79 and had obtained a grant of land from her almost immediately after his election.¹²¹ William Sutton, doctor of theology and a co-founder of Brasenose College, was vicar of St Stephen's Walbrook and of Ashford, Kent, both livings closely associated with faithful Woodville servants (John Forster and Sir John Fogge). He was to be condemned to death, and then reprieved, for his involvement in the Yorkist conspiracy of 1495. Thomas Brent, her chaplain and another doctor, steered a safer course; he had been Elizabeth's almoner – the dispenser of her official charity – when she was queen, and was a canon of St Paul's.¹²² All these men, particularly Ingelby, and their long association with

Elizabeth suggest the austere direction of her piety during her last years.

Elizabeth's low-key funeral procession and burial at Windsor beside Edward IV certainly reflected her reduced status, but it also reflected her own pious humility and was in accordance with current teaching.¹²³ In her will she had asked to be buried at Windsor in accordance with Edward IV's wishes and her own, and 'without pompes entreing or costlie expensis donne thereabought'. When she died on 8 June 1492 her desire 'in her dethe bedde' was observed, and 'on Whitsonday she was ... by water conveied to Wyndesore and ther prevely thorow the litill parke conveied into the castell with out ryngyng of any belles or receyvng of the dean or chanons ...'. A few persons close to her, the prior of Charterhouse, Dr Brent her chaplain, Edmund Haute, and one priest and clerk of Windsor College buried her 'prevely' at about eleven o'clock at night with no dirige or mass. On Monday, however, the bishop of Rochester arrived for the obsequies and so did most of the heralds; but all that was done that day was to set up a low hearse 'such as they use for the comyn peple' covered with a cloth of black cloth of gold on which six scutcheons of her arms had been 'pynned', and surrounded by four wooden and four silvergilt candlesticks. On the Tuesday four of her daughters and other female relatives arrived at Windsor – the Queen was expecting a child and did not attend. Dorset, Elizabeth's son, also arrived, and other nobles, knights and officers including Edmund of Suffolk, the Earl of Essex, Viscount Welles, Sir Charles Somerset, and Edmund Chaderton, once treasurer of the chamber to Richard, Duke of Gloucester and Richard III, and now chancellor to Queen Elizabeth of York.¹²⁴ On Tuesday night the dirige was finally said by the Bishop of Rochester. The herald who recorded the event thought poorly of the clerical attendance, the inadequate supply of candles and the old and half-used torches held by poor men who were neither gowned nor hooded; but presumably Elizabeth herself would only have thought that her wishes for no pomp were being observed. A mass of Our Lady was sung Wednesday morning, the Marquess making the offering, and then a mass of the Trinity at which the Queen's daughter, Anne, was chief mourner, taking the place of her pregnant sister, the Queen. The other daughters duly offered as well as the Marquess, all the officers of the College of St George and everyone else present who wanted to,

but there was none offryng to the corps duryng the masse, ther was geven certayne money in almes after masse, the lord marquys rewarded [blank] their costes xl s. I pray God to have mersy on her sowle ...¹²⁵

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The biographers of Elizabeth are Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, 8 vols, London 1864, vol. 2, ch. 1 (pp. 1-19); David MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, London 1938. Making important contributions to her reputation are the biographies of her husband: Cora Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, 2 vols, London 1923; Charles Ross, *Edward IV*, London 1974. The only substantial correction to the traditional view of the Queen and her relatives is J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and politics in the fifteenth century: the Nevilles and the Wydevilles', originally published in 1963, and here cited from his collected essays, *Crown and Nobility, 1450-1509*, London 1976, pp. 94-126; Lander does not, however, deal with the case of Thomas Cook nor the events of 1483, for which see below.
2. A.R. Myers, 'The household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466-67', originally published in 1957-58, and here cited from his collected essays, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England*, London 1985, pp. 251-358.
3. A.R. Myers, 'The household of Queen Margaret of Anjou', in his *Crown, Household and Parliament* (see n. 2 above), pp. 135-209, esp. 182 and n. 2.
4. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), pp. 105-07; and Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 85-91.
5. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), pp. 105-08 and esp. nn. 82-84, deals thoroughly with the immediate reactions to the marriage and the far more important reasons of foreign policy for the growing split between Edward and Warwick. Compare Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 91 ff.
6. C. Fahy, 'The marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville: a new Italian source', *English Historical Review*, vol. 76 (1960), pp. 660-63. And see Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), p. 106.
7. This gossip was recorded by the Danzig merchant Caspar Weinreich, see Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'English events in Caspar Weinreich's Danzig chronicle, 1461-1495', *The Ricardian*, vol. 7 (1986), pp. 310-20, esp. 312-13 and n. 8.
8. Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong, 2nd ed., Oxford 1969, pp. 60-63.
9. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 2, *The History of King Richard III*, ed. R.S. Sylvester, New Haven and London 1963, pp. 60-65.
10. Strickland (see n. 1), p. 14, was quoted verbatim without acknowledgement by MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 42, see below and nn. 42 and 43. See also Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), p. 89, for her 'designing' character.
11. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), pp. 109-14, deals comprehensively with these marriages and their supposed unpopularity. See also Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 92-94.
12. E.g. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 354-55, sees the marriages as indicating the *trend* of her ambitions, a comment amplified by MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 71, who says the marriages were the *cause* of her unpopularity. Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 97 ff., on the family's unpopularity.
13. Myers, 'Household of Elizabeth Woodville' (see n. 2), *passim* and esp. pp. 252-59. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 364, 377-78. Old habits die hard, however: Armstrong in his edition of Mancini (see n. 8), p. 109 n. 11, notes the modest household shown in her household account of 1466 but says this was Edward controlling her lavish spending (already in her first year as queen?), and Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), p. 118, also allows for this possibility of Edward's control. See Lander also, pp. 114-16, 118, 124-25, on the generally modest level of grants to the Woodvilles overall, especially if contrasted to Neville gains. Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), e.g. p. 97, remains partly unconvinced.
14. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 395-96, who rarely applies a personal adjective to anyone, calls her 'haughty' in connection with the 'famous' churching ceremony of her eldest daughter, Elizabeth, in February 1465, described by the Bohemian Rozmital (see *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital ...*, ed. M. Letts, The Hakluyt Society, second series, no. 108, Cambridge 1957, pp. 46-47). Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), pp. 117-18, disposes of this accusation. Another example of the attitude of modern commentators is a mistranslation by an editor of the narrative of the funeral of Richard, Duke of York: the text explains

- that the Queen was dressed all in blue *sans haulx atour* which merely means 'without a high headdress', but this was translated as 'without any pride', J.R.S. Whiting, 'Two 15th Century Chester Heralds. Pt. III', *Coat of Arms*, vol. 12 (1971), pp. 160-65. See also P.W. Hammond, Anne F. Sutton, Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'The Reburial of Richard, Duke of York, 21-30 July 1476', *The Ricardian*, vol. 10 (1994), pp. 122-65, esp. 135, 138.
- 15 Not in Strickland. Repeats of the traditional story are Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 459-62; MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 70-74, who accords maximum blame to his heroine; Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 99-101. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), p. 115, merely says that the story, if true, shows an evil streak in Rivers and his wife.
 - 16 For the myth and actual events of the trial and its background, and in particular the episodes of the 'gold' and Markham's 'dismissal', see A.F. Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook and his 'troubles': an investigation', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, vol. 3 (1978), pp. 85-108, esp. pp. 89-92. See also the present authors' chapter on Cook's career in *John Vale's Book ...*, ed. M.L. Kekewich, C. Richmond, A.F. Sutton, L. Visser-Fuchs and J. Watts, Richard III and Yorkist History Trust 1995. Myers, 'Household of Queen Margaret of Anjou' (see n. 3), pp. 141-42, implies that Elizabeth's claims to queen's gold were often successful, though Margaret of Anjou's were not, and that such claims were always problematic and London always resisted them (see also next note).
 17. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, eds, *The Great Chronicle*, London 1938, pp. 208, 430n.
 18. See Sutton, 'Cook' (see n. 16), *passim*, on the *Great Chronicle* and its effect on the stories.
 19. MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 70-74. Also repeated most recently A. Crawford, 'The king's burden? The consequences of royal marriage in fifteenth-century England', in *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces*, ed. R.A. Griffiths, Gloucester 1981, pp. 50-51.
 20. There is also no evidence for the more lurid versions which suggest that Desmond's two sons were murdered or at least cruelly treated by Worcester, nor for the stories that it was Worcester who caused the discord that precipitated the crisis and Desmond's arrest and execution, see A.J. Otway-Ruthven, *A History of Medieval Ireland*, London 1968, p. 392. The whole story is also dismissed as a 'Tudor fabrication' by Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 101 n. 2, 203-04. The reason for Desmond's arrest was, and is, unclear and this may have helped the creation of an apocryphal explanation.
 21. J.T. Gilbert, *Lives of the Viceroy of Ireland*, Dublin 1865, pp. 386-87, and see n. 25 below. *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts preserved in the Archbishopial Library at Lambeth*, vol. 2, 1575-88, ed. J.S. Brewer and W. Bullen, London 1868, pp. xxxvii note, cv-cvi. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, *The Book of Howth Miscellaneous*, London 1871, pp. 186-87.
 22. *Complete Peerage*, London 1916, vol. 4, p. 248 note b. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 436-37.
 23. MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 42-43. His notes give all the *later* repeats of the story; he used Scofield extensively but in this case did not follow her caution; he also noted that G.H. Orpen, the author of chapter 13 on Ireland in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 8, Cambridge 1936, among other works on Irish history, did not credit the story, but his reference to where Orpen said this had not been found.
 24. P.M. Kendall, *Richard III*, London 1955, p. 444, ch. 8, n. 8; in fact this association originated with Gilbert, *History of the Viceroy of Ireland* (see n. 21), pp. 386-87, who had access presumably to the grandson's *mémoire* or an Irish chronicle which recounted the same details (Gilbert's notes, pp. 589, 601, do not reveal his precise source readily; on pp. 590-91, as a footnote, he recounts the story of the execution of Desmond's children from Hall's chronicle!). R. Horrox and P. Hammond, eds, *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, 4 vols London and Upminster 1978-83, vol. 3, p. 108. And see C. Ross, *Richard III*, London 1981, p. 33 n. 37.
 25. For the whole episode see Sutton, 'Cook' (see n. 16), pp. 103-4. The purpose of the witchcraft and the images is not specified, *Rolls of Parliament*, vol. 6, p. 232. Not in Lander, 'Marriage', or Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1).
 26. A.R. Myers, 'The captivity of a royal witch: the household accounts of Queen Joan of Navarre, 1419-21', in his *Crown, Household and Parliament* (see n. 2), pp. 93-133, esp. pp. 93-107.

27. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), p. 113 n. 104; Sutton, 'Cook' (see n. 16), pp. 100 ff. See also *John Vale's Book* (see n. 16), ch. 3.
28. Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), pp. 115-16, summarises.
29. For the whole affair see Lander, 'The treason and death of the duke of Clarence: a reinterpretation', ch. 10 of his *Crown and Nobility, 1450-1509* (see n. 1); M.A. Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence. George, Duke of Clarence, 1449-78*, Gloucester 1980, ch. 4, 'Treason and Trial 1476-78'; Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 239-45.
30. Mancini (see n. 8), pp. 62-63, 70-71, 113, and n. 32. Clarence's accusation was based on the fact that Elizabeth had been a widow when she married the King; whether he knew the story of Edward's precontract with Eleanor Butler remains debatable. See particularly M. Levine, 'Richard III – usurper or lawful king?', *Speculum*, vol. 34 (1959), pp. 391-401, esp. 394-96.
31. More, *Richard III* (see n. 9), p. 7
32. MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 124, n. 4.
33. MacGibbon, p. 124, n. 1, and references given there; see also L. Stoff, *Essai sur Mélusine, Roman du xive siècle par Jean d'Arras*, Dijon/Paris 1930, passim, esp. Table 4; and see below and n. 76.
34. Hicks, *Clarence* (see n. 29), ch 4.
35. *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-1486*, ed. N. Pronay and J. Cox, London 1986, pp. 154-55.
36. Mancini (see n. 8), pp. 68-69.
37. More, *Richard III* (see n. 9), pp. 11, 51; see also Moorhen (see n. 39), pp. 460-61, and the same, part 2, *The Ricardian*, vol. 9 (1993), pp. 482-97, esp. pp. 491-92.
38. Mancini's judgment of Elizabeth Woodville is curiously hostile and full of vague accusations. His claim that she introduced *alieni* ('strangers?', 'foreigners?') to the court and made them very influential is mysterious. The only foreigners she could have introduced were her Luxembourg relatives, but they only appeared at court as ambassadors from the Duke of Burgundy shortly after Elizabeth's coronation when Edward needed to advertise his wife's exalted family background, see e.g. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 372-73. There is no evidence that Edward ever gave special favours to the Luxembourgs. Mancini's depiction of the *alieni* climbing to influential positions may be partly based on the prejudice of many Roman historians against the freedmen at the court and their influence on the emperors, and partly on the equally standard accusation against foreign-born queens of introducing their unwanted countrymen into their husband's court and favouring them out of all proportion. Mancini (see n. 8), pp. 64-65. See also A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's narrative of the events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. 38 (1994), pp. 152-63.
39. There is no reason to assume that the businesslike marriage bargains that Elizabeth made with Hastings concerning their children shortly before she herself married Edward were 'the origin of the dislike she felt for him in later years ...', Lander, 'Marriage' (see n. 1), p. 107. see also Wendy E.A. Moorhen, 'William, Lord Hastings and the crisis of 1483: an assessment. Part 1', *The Ricardian*, vol. 9 (1993), pp. 446-66, esp. 451 and n. 34, where some modern comments on the contract are given.
40. Even the *Great Chronicle* (see n. 17) when commenting on the sudden rise of the Woodvilles after Elizabeth's marriage spoke with hindsight (pp. 202-03, our italics): 'And then were the chyldyr of the said lord Ryvers hugely exaltd and sett In grete honour, ... and thus kyndelid the sparkyll of envy, whych by contynuance grewe to soo grete a blase and flawme of fyre, ... as affyr wyll appere.'
41. Kendall, *Richard III* (see n. 24), pp. 165-71, esp. 165-66, on odium of Woodvilles and Elizabeth.
42. R. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, London 1831, pp. 366-79, esp. 378-79.
43. *A Collection of all the Wills now known to be extant of the Kings and Queens of England ...*, printed by J. Nichols, printer to the Society of Antiquaries of London 1780, pp. 347-48, gives the entry concerning the May meeting; more recently edited by F.R.H. Du Boulay, *Registrum Thome Bourghier, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi*, Canterbury and York Society vol. 54, Oxford 1957, pp. xxii, 52-55; and see A.F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond, eds., *The Coronation of Richard III*, Gloucester 1983, pp. 17, 79, and Ross, *Richard III*,

- London 1981, p. 40.
44. Kendall, *Richard III* (see n. 24), pp. 160-61; he was perhaps inspired by Scofield, vol. 2, p. 364 n. 3, who also assumes that the *short* list of executors at the May meeting was the full list.
 45. MacGibbon (see n. 1) does, belatedly, acknowledge her difficulties, pp. 204-05.
 46. MacGibbon, p. 42, although he adopts a more admiring tone in his conclusion, p. 204. Scofield is free of this particular innuendo.
 47. Strickland (see n. 1), vol. 2, p. 14; see also above n. 10.
 48. MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 42; see also above and n. 10.
 49. Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 87, 89; this is despite Ross's stated dismissal of both the Desmond episode as a later fabrication and her complicity in the death of Clarence, on which this portrait is largely based!
 50. See the 'Record of Bluemantle Pursuivant', in C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1913, Appendix XV, pp. 379-88.
 51. *Crowland Chronicle* (see n. 35), pp. 154-55; Riley's translation is probably more logical: 'The queen most beneficently tried to extinguish every spark ...', H.T. Riley, transl., *Ingulph's Chronicles*, London 1893, p. 485.
 52. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 393, 428, 482-83, 546; vol. 2, pp. 27-28, 60, 163, 210, 253, 299.
 53. See illustrations in E. Danbury, 'English and French artistic propaganda during the period of the Hundred Years War: some evidence of royal charters', in *Power, Culture and Religion in France 1350-c.1550*, ed. C.T. Allmand, Woodbridge 1989, pp. 75-97.
 54. *A Collection of Wills* (see n. 43), pp. 350-51, esp. 350; also MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 199.
 55. See e.g. Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow. The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts*, Princeton 1992, ch. 5, 'Queens as intercessors'.
 56. See above and n. 16.
 57. L. Lyell and F. Watney, eds., *The Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company 1453-1527*, Cambridge 1936, pp. 100-1, 115-18, 121-22, 125-26, 127-29, 136-38. Also cited Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 101-02; he also gives another example of the support of the Woodvilles and councillors of the Queen and the Prince of Wales being sought by the corporation of Bristol.
 58. The sole copy is BL, Ms Royal 17 D xv, ff. 327-332v. Printed by Thomas Wright, ed., *Political Songs and Poems relating to English History composed during the period from the Accession of Edward III to that of Richard III*, 2 vols. Rolls Series, London 1859, 1861, vol. 2, pp. 271-82.
 59. For a detailed account of all the events covered by the poem see Scofield, vol. 2, pp. 576-93; see also C. Richmond, 'Fauconberg's Kentish rising of May 1471', *English Historical Review*, vol. 85 (1970), pp. 673-92; L. Visser-Fuchs, 'Edward IV's memoir on paper to Charles, Duke of Burgundy. The so-called 'short version of the Arrivall'', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. 36 (1992), pp. 167-227.
 60. Wright (see n. 58), p. 274.
 61. Wright, pp. 278, 280.
 62. Wright, pp. 280, 281.
 63. Wright, pp. 281-82.
 64. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 541, 546; MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 109, 213-14. Perhaps John Wellys and John Strelley and Margaret, his wife, who were rewarded for their good service 'to the king and his consort' in 1471 and '72 served her during Edward's exile, *CPR 1467-77*, pp. 280, 342, 368.
 65. Wright (see n. 58), p. 279.
 66. C.M. Barron, 'London and the crown 1451-61', in J.R.L. Highfield and R. Jeffs, *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century*, Gloucester 1981, pp. 88-109.

67. Sutton, 'Cook' (see n. 16), pp. 102-05; *John Vale's Book* (see n. 16), ch. 3.
68. Sutton, 'Cook' (see n. 16), pp. 103-04.
69. The 'Record of Bluemantle Pursuivant', in Kingsford, *Literature* (see n. 50), p. 382; MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 109.
70. It also contained a text of the *Promise of Matrimony* printed in 1483, recently removed.
71. For John Multon, see *John Vale's Book* (see n. 16), ch. 3.
72. For the festivities on the bridge see Corporation of London Records Office, Bridge House Rentals and Accounts 1460-84, ff. 94v-95, printed in G. Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300-1660*, vol. 1, 1300-1576, London and New York 1966, App. B, pp. 324-31. And see Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 375-77.
73. The presence of Mary Cleophas can only be explained by the tradition that she married twice, like Elizabeth Woodville herself.
74. M. Harrod, 'Queen Elizabeth Woodville's visit to Norwich in 1469 from the chamberlain's accounts for the ninth and tenth years of Edward IV', *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. 5, (1859), pp. 32-37. The precise dates of her visit are uncertain, but the mayor expected her on Thursday 13 July (Harrod p.33). See Scofield (see n. 1) vol. 1, pp. 490-98, for this period, but she was unaware that Elizabeth visited Norwich.
75. *The Coventry Leet Book*, ed. M.D. Harris, 2 vols. EETS OS 134, 135 (1907-8), pp. 391-93, esp. 393.
76. See e.g. L. Stoff, *Essai sur Mélusine. Roman du XIVe siècle par Jean d'Arras*, Dijon/Paris 1930, passim, and esp. table 4. The story of the Three Kings or Wise Men was very popular at the time and many mss survive of the English version of John of Hildesheim's *History of the Three Kings of Cologne*. According to this the Three Kings were virgins except – following one tradition – Melchior, who had a son who died very young after announcing his own death. Elizabeth's descent from one of the kings must therefore derive from a separate tradition. C. Horstmann, ed., *The Three Kings of Cologne*, EETS OS 85 (1886); H. Hoffmann, *Die Heiligen Drei Koenige*, Bonn 1975, a very detailed study of their cult and religious, social and political importance, makes no mention of any European dynasty claiming descent from any of the Three Kings. See also above and n. 33.
77. In 14th and 15th-century female owners' collections moral and religious books make up a third to half of the total number, see e.g. *Histoire des Bibliothèques françaises. Les bibliothèques médiévales. Du VIe siècle à 1530*, gen.ed. A Vernet, 1989, G. Hasenohr, L'essor des bibliothèques privées aux XIVe et XVe siècles, pp. 242, 248-49, 252.
78. N.F. Blake, *Cuxton's Own Prose*, London 1973, p. 58.
79. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 2, pp. 452 n. 1, 457, mentions BL, Ms. Royal 14 E iii (see below), Cuxton's *Recuyell* (see below), and Princeton University Library Ms. Garrett 168, the so-called 'Testament of the Sultan', which was made for the Prince of Wales and also bears the names of two of Elizabeth's daughters, Elizabeth and Cecily. MacGibbon (see n. 1), p.208, repeats Scofield. Carol Meale, 'Manuscripts, readers and patrons in fifteenth-century England: Sir Thomas Malory and Arthurian romance', *Arthurian Literature*, vol. 4 (1985), pp. 93-126, esp. pp. 120-22, lists Royal 14 E iii, the fragmentary missal, the *Recuyell*, and the Hours of the Guardian Angel (for all these see below). In her, "... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich and frensche": laywomen and their books in late medieval England', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale, Cambridge 1993, pp. 128-58, Meale only mentions Royal 14 E iii, and so does Kate Harris, 'Patrons, buyers and owners: the evidence for ownership and the rôle of book owners in book production and the book trade', in J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall, *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 163-99. Totally spurious is the ascription to Elizabeth's ownership of San Marino, Huntington Library Ms. HM 133, a fifteenth-century *Brut* containing a note or pen trial: *Thys byll made*: this was once read as *Elyzabeth madre E.W.*; see *Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, ed. C.W. Dutschke et al., 2 vols. San Marino 1989, pp. 177-78. P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, catalogue of the exhibition at the NPG, 1973, no.156, assumed that the fragmentary missal, now in the Bergendal Collection Toronto (see below), belonged to Elizabeth Woodville before it passed to her daughter.

80. Myers, 'Household of Elizabeth Woodville' (see n. 2), p. 318. C. Meale, *Manuscripts, readers and patrons* (see n. 79), p. 121. For Wulflete see A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, Cambridge 1963, p. 657; he is described in the account as 'formerly chancellor of the University of Cambridge' and he had links with Clare, Suffolk, a place patronised and frequently visited by members of the York family.
81. For the present authors' speculation on these mss see their 'Choosing a book in late 15th-century England and Burgundy', in *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. C.M. Barron and N. Saul, Stroud 1995, pp. 61-98. Compare the inventory of books left by another English medieval queen, Isabella, widow of Edward II, at her death in 1358: romances, homilies, history (both ancient and a *Brut*), a bible, an apocalypse, Latini's *Trésor* and plenty of devotional texts, S. Cavanaugh, 'Royal books: King John to Richard II', *The Library*, 6th series, vol. 10 (1988), pp. 304-16, esp. 310-11.
82. BL, Royal 14 E iii. G.F. Warner and J.P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, London 1921, vol. 2, p. 140. Meale, 'Manuscripts, readers and patrons' (see n. 79), p. 103.
83. R.S. Loomis, *Arthurian Literature*, Oxford 1959, pp. 295-318. For translations see: *Lancelot of the Lake*, trans. C. Corley, introd., E. Kennedy, Oxford 1989; *The Quest of the Holy Grail*, trans., P.M. Mataresso, Harmondsworth 1969; *The Death of King Arthur*, trans., J. Cable, Harmondsworth 1971.
84. < > written alongside, in the margin. Thom has been rendered as *th*; Roos used it copiously.
85. Meale, 'Manuscripts, readers and patrons', (see n. 79), p. 103. E. Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos*, London 1961, pp. 52-55, 547-50; P.W. Fleming, 'The Hautes and their 'circle': culture and the English gentry', in *England in the Fifteenth Century. Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams, Woodbridge 1987, esp. 85-102, esp. 90-91.
86. Women very often used their full christian name, but the use of initials only is not unknown; Edward Woodville should not be rejected as the owner of this signature because little is known about him.
87. MacGibbon (see n. 1) illustrates all three signatures: Royal 14 E iii, f. 162, in his frontispiece; letter to Sir William Stonor [1482] and another letter [1491], both opp. p. 196.
88. Pedigree and notes on family, MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 224 and opp. ; sometimes called Eleanor; see also *Complete Peerage*, vol. 6, p.160. Warner and Gilson (see n. 82) must be mistaken in their identification of 'Jane Grey' as a relative of her first husband. The names of the two daughters of Elizabeth Woodville also appear in conjunction (but not on the same page) with that of Jane Grey in Princeton University Library Ms. Garrett 168; see above n. 79, and Meale, '... all the bokes' (see n. 79), p. 157, n. 90.
89. His literary reputation is vague. See Seaton, *Richard Roos* (see n. 85), pp. 74-78, for his connections with the Yorkist court: his niece, Elizabeth was in the household of the Duchess of Suffolk, and as an early promoter of Queens' College, Cambridge, he may have had a personal tie of interest with the Queen.
90. Roos listed the contents; later someone else erased part of his list because once the 'paper boke' was removed it was no longer accurate. It is possible Roos had the volume rebound; it is now in a binding of 1757.
91. Meale, 'Manuscripts, readers and patrons' (see n. 79) p. 103, and earlier commentators say Eleanor Haute gave it to the Queen. In the 1535 catalogue of the books at Richmond Palace, was included no.103 'le St Gral donne a la Roynne' (our italics), see H. Omont, 'Les manuscrits français des rois d'Angleterre au château de Richemont', in *Études romanes dédiées à Gaston Paris*, Paris 1891, pp. 1-13. Such an addition to the title is unique in the Richmond list, but does not prove that the entry refers to the present volume, as it is very unlikely that Elizabeth Woodville would be referred to as *the* queen in 1535; the book could have (re)entered the royal library around that time, the note is more likely to be referring to Katherine of Aragon or Anne Boleyn.
92. San Marino, Huntington Library Ms. [sic] R.B. 62222. N.F. Blake, *Caxton: England's First Publisher*, London 1976, p. 133. Meale, 'Manuscripts, readers and patrons' (see n. 79), p. 121 and n. 100.
93. The first *take* – at the end of the line – is struck through.

94. A Thomas Shukburgh appears in Harvard University Law School Ms. 43, a collection of legal forms, a Latin-English nominal and a dictaminal formulary, see A.I. Doyle, 'English books in and out of court', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne, London 1983, pp. 163-82, esp. 180, n. 53. For the Shukburgh family of Upper Shukburgh, Warwickshire, see *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, 2nd series, vol. 3 (1890), pp. 317-19, 352-59; W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire*, revised by W. Thomas, London 1730, pp. 309-11; VCH *Warwickshire*, vol. 6, pp. 215-19; Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity. A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401-1499*, Cambridge 1992, passim. There were three or four successive heads of the family called Thomas at the end of the century; Thomas junior may have been Carpenter's Thomas II or III (*ibid.* p. 666). Some members of the family were drapers, of London (e.g. *CPR 1467-77*, pp. 79, 204, 223; *CPR 1476-85*, pp. 29, 82. A John Shukburgh is called King's servant in 1468; *CPR 1467-77*, p. 45; comp. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, p. 388, n. 5).
95. Such separately inserted illustrations are not uncommon, compare the ms. of Anthony Woodville's translation of the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, now London, Lambeth Palace Ms. 256; this text was printed by Caxton; the ms copy may have been made to advertise the printed edition and has a presentation scene on a separate leaf. See the present authors', 'Richard III's Books: mistaken attributions', *The Ricardian*, vol. 9 (1992), pp. 303-07.
96. Blake, *Caxton's Own Prose* (see n. 78), p. 104.
97. Elizabeth has also been said to have been the noble lady with the many daughters who asked Caxton to translate the *Booke whiche the Knyght of the Toure Made* as advice for his daughters. This was printed 31 January 1484. Caxton beseeched the lady 'to receyve this lytel book in gre and thank', he would pray for her and he asked all women to pray for her that she may 'regne in heven sempiternally.' He does not name her. The identification with Queen Elizabeth Woodville had been made on the grounds that she was noble, had daughters and, when the book came to be printed during Richard III's reign, she could not be named; the clincher of this argument being Caxton's prayer that she should *reign* in heaven. In fact, however, all souls might come to *reign* in heaven, not just that of a queen. Caxton frequently prays for his dedicatees and in his epilogue to Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, printed probably very close in time to the *Book of the Knight of the Tower*, he uses the same expression: 'That we regne in heven with the ordres nyne'; according to some theologians the souls of the truly devout could join the nine orders of angels and thus 'reign in heaven' with them. It has also to be remembered that many of Caxton's dedicatees were nameless and no doubt he did not always have a specific person in mind. It is likely that it was the text of the book itself – which Caxton had just translated – which suggested to his imagination that such a lady with daughters *should* want the book. See the present authors', 'Richard III's Books: XI. Ramon Lull's *Order of Chivalry* translated by William Caxton', *The Ricardian*, vol. 9 (1991), pp. 110-29, esp. 115-16, and references given there.
98. Liverpool Cathedral Ms. Radcliffe 6. On this ms. and all details of cult, text and ownership see the present authors', 'The cult of angels in late fifteenth-century England: an Hours of the Guardian Angel presented to Queen Elizabeth Woodville', in *Women and the Book*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane Taylor, British Library Publications 1995. Elizabeth's relationship with John Ingelby, the prior of the Carthusian house at Shene, across the river from Syon, may represent a link with both Shene and Syon: literary and devotional communication between the two houses were intense (see *ibid.* and below).
99. Compare J. Wickham Legge, *The Sarum Missal*, Oxford 1916, pp. 119-20, 158-59.
100. F. 21v; it begins: *Auctoritate dei, beatorum petri et pauli apostolorum, totius ordinis domini summi pontificis et totius celestis curie in hac parte michi commissa ...* (Out of the authority given to me in this matter by God, the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, the whole order of the lord the highest pontiff and the whole celestial court ...). Compare e.g. the absolution texts given at the end of the chapter 'Greater Excommunication' in W. Maskell, ed., *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, 3 vols. Oxford 1882, vol. 3. It is very unlikely Elizabeth of York – or her mother – ever needed such a powerful formula! It was no doubt inserted by a cleric out of interest or for easy reference in case of sudden need. On the page opposite the absolution a nineteenth-century hand inexpertly copied the text, and headed it: *Elisabeth d'York (dei gratia Anglie, francie et hibernie Regina) née à Westminster en 1466* [corrected to 1465]:

épouse de Henry de Lancastre en 1486. meurt le 15 février 1502 [corrected to 1503] en couche de son 4^e enfant. Voici le texte de l'absolution qui lui fut donnée. The same hand, probably that of the French owner Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Barrois (1784-1855), made a list of the marginal inscriptions on the flyleaf opposite f. 1, and headed it: *on lit de la main d'Elizabeth*.

Both the idea that Elizabeth of York made these inscriptions and that this was the absolution she was given at her death seem to have sprung entirely from the imagination of the French writer of these notes. Barrois was a collector of manuscripts and expert on medieval French literature; he wrote a major study on the libraries of the sons of King John II and edited texts, but was not necessarily knowledgeable about England, see *Dictionnaire de Biographie française*, ed. Prevost and Roman d'Amat, vol. 5, Paris 1951, cols 619-20.

101. See the imaginative interpretation in the NPG catalogue (see n. 79), no. 156. All inscriptions are on the convenient right-hand pages. The *Elizabeth dei gratia* (f. 1) appears to be in a different, slightly more formal hand. None of the inscriptions bear any resemblance to known samples of either Elizabeth Woodville's or Elizabeth of York's hand; they were also in the habit of writing a y in their names and both more often than not used an s. The marginal notes are the following: f. 1, top – *Westminster abbeye*, bottom – *Elizabeth dei gratia* (or *gratius??*; the inscription actually appears to read *gras*) and *to my good ffrend ... J* (text smudged; according to the NPG catalogue (see n. 79) the text continues: *mortimer*); f. 2 – *brother and sister* and two geometrical doodles; f. 4, bottom – *To the right worshipfull and my especiall good ffrend*; f. 11, between lines 7 and 8 – *westminster*; f. 12, bottom – *to the victorious and triumphous king henry*; f. 20, bottom – *right and rong* and *bien et mal*; f. 21, bottom – *Westminster abbeye*.
102. The absolution was, of course, also a text pronounced by the priest and not by laymen. Such texts were, and are, often given at the end of liturgical books for easy reference. For descriptions of the ms see the NPG catalogue (see n. 79), but especially Sotheby's sale catalogue, 6 December 1983, lot 65, where all relevant references are given. The ms is now part of the Bergendal Collection, Toronto (Ms. 60) and we are most grateful to Dr Joseph Pope, curator of the collection, for generously supplying us with a full xerox copy of the ms and for his kind interest and assistance.
103. B.A. Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University*, vol. 2, New York 1987, pp. 48-50: Ms. 281, made for the Carent family whose arms are in the volume; the inscription is on the verso of the original front flyleaf. See also Doyle, 'English books' (see n. 94), p. 174.
104. John Lydgate, *The Life of Our Lady. A Critical Edition*, ed. J.A. Lauritis et al., Duquesne Studies Philological Series, vol. 2, Pittsburg 1961, pp. 22-40: Jane Fizzlewis, owner of Durham University Ms. Cosin V ii 16; Queen Margaret of Anjou is presumably the Queen Margaret described as an earlier owner of Bodleian Library Ms. Hatton 73 in a late 15th/early 16th-century inscription; and Anne Bourchier, presumably Elizabeth Woodville's sister married to Sir William Bourchier 1466 (d.1489), owned Bodleian Library Ms. Ashmole 39. For the ownership of the *Miracles* by aristocratic ladies see C. Meale, 'The Miracles of Our Lady: Context and Interpretation', *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. D. Pearsall, Woodbridge 1990, p. 130. The motto(s) of Elizabeth Woodville are not known.
105. B. Guenéé, 'Temps de l'histoire et temps de la mémoire au moyen âge', in his *Politique et histoire au moyen âge*, Paris 1981, p. 31. John Rous, *Historia Angliae*, Oxford 1716, p. 211. VCH Kent, vol. 2, p. 194.
106. Corporation of London Records Office, Journal 7, f. 122v.
107. CPR 1476-85, pp. 133-34, 13 Jan. 1479; Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 2, p. 430; MacGibbon (see n. 1), p. 109; C.A.J. Armstrong, 'The piety of Cecily, Duchess of York', in his *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century*, London 1983, pp. 135-56, esp. 154 n. 47. Elizabeth's mother-in-law, Cecily of York, also had a devotion to St Erasmus – no doubt for the same reasons – as is witnessed by the presence of the saint in the stained glass she may have commissioned at Fotheringhay, the prospective Yorkist mausoleum, and by the great Agnus Dei 'of gold with the Trinite, Saint Erasmus, and the Salutation of our Lady' which she left in her will; see R. Marks, 'The glazing of Fotheringhay church and college', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. 131 (1978), pp. 79-109, esp. 85, 89, 95; J.G. Nichols, ed., *Wills from Doctors' Commons*, Camden Society, Old Series, vol. 83, 1863, p. 6.

108. *Cal. Papal Registers*, vol. 13, pt. 2, pp. 582-83, and see vol. 13, pt. 1, p. 8. The charterhouses of Witham and Hinton received from Edward IV an annual grant of wine from the port of Bristol 'for the sustenance of their bodies weakened by their vigils and fasts', VCH *Somerset*, vol. 2, pp. 127-28. And see E.M. Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England*, London 1930, p. 236, Edward also patronised the charterhouse of Mount Grace, Yorks, his family was prayed for and daily masses of St Mary, the Holy Trinity and St Erasmus were said; Thompson does not go into details about Yorkist patronage of Shene.
109. VCH *Surrey*, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 91-93. The grant of 1 April 1479 was for her life; extended by Edward IV to a grant in perpetuity in May. Ingelby founded a guild of St Mary in Bagshot to pray for the King and Queen. He appears to have been chief visitor of the English province for a good many years and expressed disapproval of the personal possessions held by the monks of the London charterhouse in 1494, Thompson, *Carthusian Order* (see preceding note), pp. 248, 273-75, 372. John Ingelby was presumably a member of the prominent northern family; an earlier John (de) Ingelby had been the prime mover behind the foundation of the famous Carthusian house at Mount Grace, Yorks, in 1398; see e.g. James Hogg, 'Mount Grace and late medieval English spirituality', *Collectanea Cartusiana* 3, *Analecta Cartusiana*, vol. 82 (1980), pp. 3, 4, 19, nn. 10, 57; A.J. Pollard, *North Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses*, Oxford 1990, pp. 181-82, and references given in both. A William Ingelby was knight of the body to Richard III.
110. W.G. Searle, *The History of the Queens' College, Cambridge*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society Octavo Publications, vol. 9 (1867), p. 72; VCH *Cambridgeshire*, vol. 3, pp. 408-09; Emden, *Cambridge* (see n. 80), Andrew Doket, p. 190; Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 2, p. 439; Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), p. 270.
111. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, pp. 437-38, who notes that the credit for Elizabeth's generosity is often given to Edward's mistress, Elizabeth Shore.
112. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 1, p. 382, vol. 2, pp. 20-21; John Stone, *Chronicle*, ed. W.G. Searle, Cambridge 1902, pp. 93-94, 113, 117. For the windows depicting Edward IV, Elizabeth and most of their children in the N-W transept of Canterbury Cathedral see M.H. Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain, vol. 2, Oxford 1981, pp. 251-73, esp. 258-61, pls 181-202. Caviness repeats the tradition of Edward IV's donation of the window, but adds that there is no evidence to prove this or any other royal donation; she suggests it was glazed from c. 1482/3, and that the work was resumed or completed c. 1486/7. Her assumption of a break in the execution of the work is based on her interpretation of the effect of the political events of 1483-85, including the theory that Richard III objected to the window being finished! She suggests it could have been Archbishop Bourghier who was responsible for the glazing; '... that the work is skimped is indicated by the short supply of colourful glasses as well as by the quality of the work'.
113. In March 1466, *CPR 1461-67*, p. 516; Rymer, *Foedera*, vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 137-38; VCH *London*, vol. 1, p. 578.
114. *Calendar of Papal Letters*, vol. 13, pt 1, pp. 90-91; R.W. Pfaff, *New Liturgical Feasts in the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford 1970, pp. 47-48; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven and London 1992, p. 289.
115. F. Roth, *The English Austin Friars, 1249-1538*, 2 vols. New York 1961, 1966, vol. 2, p. 365. No particular reason for her devotion to this particular house, or to the order of the Austin Friars as a whole, is known.
116. *Sotheby's Catalogue of the Bute Collection of Forty-two Illuminated Manuscripts and Miniatures, 13th June 1983*, item 19, pp. 80-87 (the Luton Guild Book); J.J. Lambert, *Records of the Skinners of London*, London 1933, pp. 54, 82-83; HMC Report I, p. 117 (Canterbury).
117. See e.g. F.R. Johnston, 'The English cult of St Bridget of Sweden', *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. 103 (1985), pp. 75-93, esp. 86-87; VCH *Middlesex*, vol. 1, p. 185.
118. See *The Liber Celestis of St Bridget of Sweden*, ed. R. Ellis, vol. 1, EETS OS 291, p. 253. The text was included in Yorkist propaganda material, e.g. BL, Ms. Cotton Vespasian E vii, f. 113v/117, and, strikingly, as final 'argument' in the magnificent genealogical/heraldic roll now in the Philadelphia Free Library, Ms. E 201.

119. Scofield (see n. 1), vol. 2, p. 439, on birth of Bridget whom she mistakenly assumes was named for the Irish St Bride/Bridget. Both Ross, *Edward IV* (see n. 1), pp. 273-74, and Scofield ignore Syon and their coverage of the piety of Edward and Elizabeth is minimal.
120. PCC Doggett, f. 74, printed in *A Collection of Wills* (see n. 43), pp. 350-51. N.H. Nicolas, ed., *Testamenta Vetusta*, London 1826, vol. 1, p. 25, and MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 199-200 (text), 201. The sole witnesses to the will were John, Abbot of Bermondsey, and Benedict Cun, doctor of physic (see n. 122). John Marlow was abbot 1473-1516, VCH *Surrey*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 74, 77, where little on the house in this period is to be found.
121. VCH *Middlesex*, vol. 1, p. 164; see also above and n. 109.
122. A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500*, 3 vols., Oxford 1957-59, under names. Thomas Brent was Elizabeth's almoner in 1479, favoured by both King and Queen, see J.B. Sheppard, ed., *Christ Church Letters: a Volume of Medieval Letters relating to the affairs of the Priory of Christ Church, Canterbury, (1334-c.1539)*, Camden Society, New Series 19, 1877, pp. 44-45. Dr Benedict Civy or Ciny ('Cun') was an Italian made denizen in 1496, *CPR 1494-1509*, p. 40, and C.H. Talbot and E.A. Hammond, eds *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register*, London 1965, p. 24.
123. *A Collection of Wills* (see n. 43), p. 350. And see Caxton's translation of *The Book of Good Manners*, printed 1487, bk 5, ch. 6, on the spiritual merit of modest burial (never reprinted).
124. Emden, *Oxford* (see n. 122), under name.
125. BL, Arundel Ms. 26, ff. 29v-30, a 16th century heraldic account of the funeral; also given in full by MacGibbon (see n. 1), pp. 200-02.