On 14 February 1477 Sir John Paston wrote in considerable excitement to his brother John in Norwich. A great council had been summoned to London. Its deliberations were a response to a sudden crisis in foreign relations caused by the death of the Burgundian duke, Charles the Bold, and the threat to his northern dominions posed by the French king, Louis XI. Edward IV’s sister Margaret of York, the dowager-duchess, had appealed for help. Sir John Paston envisaged rapid military action. The Calais garrison was to be reinforced by William Lord Hastings and a ‘great company’. This was to be followed by a major expedition to Flanders, commanded by the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester. Paston’s letter memorably catches the drama of the occasion: ‘It seemeth that the world is all quavering’. But historians have remained sceptical that a full-scale expedition was ever planned. Lord Hastings’s reinforcements have been regarded as purely defensive: a precaution by Edward, who chose a diplomatic solution and avoided direct military intervention. The possibility of sending an army to oppose Louis, led by the king’s brothers, has never been seriously considered and remains a footnote to late Yorkist foreign policy.2 The present article will use fresh evidence to investigate support for a military expedition in 1477, and examine the chivalric consequences of Edward’s failure to back it.

The death of Charles the Bold at the siege of Nancy on 5 January 1477 had left only his twenty-year-old daughter Mary as heiress to the duchy of Burgundy. Her stepmother, Margaret of York, wished to find a suitable
English husband for her. If such a marriage alliance took place, it almost cer-
tainly would require military action. There were strong political and economic
arguments in favour of protecting Burgundy against French aggression. If
Louis invaded Artois, Picardy and Flanders the English stronghold of Calais
would be threatened and important trading connections with the Netherlands
disrupted. There was also a chivalric setting for the council's debate: the
defenceless dowager duchess’s call to her brothers for protection against an
imminent invasion of her lands. It was an important part of the story. This
appraisal will throw new light on the military outlook of Lord Hastings and
Richard Duke of Gloucester in the last period of Edward IV’s reign.

Let us return to Sir John Paston’s letter. He anticipated a major campaign
in Flanders, in which his younger brother Edmund (a member of the Calais
garrison) would participate. This was seen as a momentous event, where reputa-
tions might be won: ‘the world is all quavering, it will reboil somewhere, so
that I deem young men shall be cherished’.3 Similar sentiments were expressed
by those on the march in July 1475, as Edward IV’s army swung past
Agincourt; the longing for a decisive battle, to rival Henry V’s sixty years
earlier, was dashed by the treaty of Picquigny. Richard Duke of Gloucester’s
initial opposition to this agreement, which abandoned his brother-in-law
Charles the Bold, is well-known; many humbler soldiers voted with their feet
and joined the Burgundian army. Hastings had also felt uncomfortable with
the treaty, refusing to provide a receipt for the pension offered him by Louis
XI.4 Military action was now wanted. As the chronicler Philippe de Commynes
bluntly put it, if Edward had followed his subjects’ wishes, he would have
offered Duke Charles’s widow, Margaret of York, an English army for her
protection.5

As the great council assembled on 14 February 1477, the urgency of the
occasion would have concentrated minds. Pragmatic issues of state had to be
weighed. The threat to the English political and mercantile interests in Calais
was counterbalanced by the risk of losing the French pension (part of the terms
of Picquigny) and a marriage alliance with the dauphin. The latter was strongly
sought after by Edward’s queen, Elizabeth Woodville, and members of her
family.6 Their influence appears to have prevailed. On 16 February instructions
were given to English ambassadors to seek further guarantees over payment of
the pension and the marriage of Edward’s eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York,
to the Dauphin Charles.7 This was the price of English non-intervention in
Burgundy.

Yet Margaret of York’s request for military assistance was primarily an
appeal to honour. On 30 January 1477 a letter of Mary of Burgundy told how
her step-mother was ‘fully occupied in dealing with the very high and mighty
prince, our well beloved lord and cousin the King of England, to persuade him to come to our aid and to uphold the everlasting alliances and treaties which were signed between him and our late lord and father. Margaret's appeal for help, reminding the king of his moral responsibility, almost certainly brought about the council meeting of 14 February.

A military enterprise against France would have been attractive to both the king's brothers. To Clarence it offered a prestigious marriage alliance. As the Crowland chronicler related: 'it was common knowledge that . . . the duchess, Lady Margaret, who was more fond of her brother Clarence than of anyone else in the family, devoted all her effort and all her attention to uniting in marriage Mary, the only daughter and heiress of the deceased Duke Charles, and the duke of Clarence whose wife had recently died'. For Gloucester it was an opportunity to establish further his reputation as a soldier, first shown in the Barnet and Tewkesbury campaign of 1471. He had become a leading member of the war party against France. In the winter of 1472 it was rumoured that he would cross to Normandy at the head of an English army. The expedition never took place, but Gloucester took personal responsibility for the despatch of English archers, sent in support of the Burgundian cause. He now had the chance to gain glory in the kind of martial endeavour he had always longed for.

According to the Crowland chronicler the king was resolutely opposed to such a marriage and threw obstacle after obstacle in Clarence's way. Instead Anthony Earl Rivers, the queen's eldest brother, was belatedly offered as a match for Mary of Burgundy. Edward's motives may have been personal: the result of a growing estrangement between him and his brother Clarence. Rivers was hardly a practical alternative. As Comynnes observed, he 'was only a petty earl, and she the greatest heiress of her time'. But such an alliance was dependent on an army the king did not wish to provide, and negotiations with Louis XI were kept open. An important new document investigates the military actions of Lord Hastings following his return to Calais. It suggests a growing rift within the English court, with a faction fighting hard to retain the war policy.

We should consider the broader context. The arrival of Lord Hastings in Calais with reinforcements in late February 1477 was viewed with considerable suspicion by Louis XI. On 6 March the French king wrote from Arras that Edward IV's object in sending Hastings with so many men was to carry off Mary of Burgundy, and that the dowager-duchess Margaret was directing the whole enterprise. Louis overestimated the number of men brought over; it was not 'a thousand or twelve hundred' but sixteen men-at-arms and 514 archers. Since he had also come to an agreement with Edward's ambassadors two days earlier, on 4 March, the letter has usually been seen as an example of
the French king’s double-dealing, or his paranoia. Yet an alternative interpretation is possible: Louis feared that Edward was not in charge of his own foreign policy, and that others were manipulating events towards war.

Two pieces of evidence support this view. The first is a letter written to Hastings by Louis XI sometime in April 1477. The French king inquired whether Edward was suffering from serious illness. This report of Edward’s ‘infirmity’ had reached Louis by means of certain Scots at his court. Hastings quickly responded that the king was in good health, and intended to celebrate the feast of the Garter at Windsor, as he usually did. This rumour predates concerns about Edward’s health in the early 1480s and may or may not have been true. But it insinuated that the king was not in control of his own affairs.

The second is an offer for a division of Burgundian territories should England acquiesce to the French invasion of the duchy. This proposal from Louis XI was sent first to Lord Hastings in mid-April. A formal approach to Edward IV was not made until late June. It is striking that Louis had chosen to sound it out with Hastings over two months earlier. Hastings responded with a request of his own, that the lands of Mary of Burgundy not be described as belonging to the crown of France. This was a tacit recognition of Burgundian independence, and a deliberate rebuff of the French king. Louis may have been trying to win over members of the English ‘war party’ by inducements, a policy that had already succeeded with Philippe de Crévecoeur, seigneur d’Esquerdes, and other Picard nobles in the spring of 1477. Yet his initiative was given little credence by Hastings or his followers, and the prospect of the English financially assisting the French invasion of Picardy (proposed by Louis in return for the cession of lands in Holland, Zeeland and Brabant) was seen as something of a joke within the Calais garrison.

Louis’ diplomatic overtures were combined with direct military action. At the end of March he had taken to the field to gain Flanders and Picardy through conquest. He captured Hesdin, with its fine castle, in two days, and then approached the port of Boulogne. A further letter of Sir John Paston, who had arrived at Calais in Lord Hastings’ retinue, described the scene. On 14 April he wrote: ‘the French king hath gotten many of the towns of the duke of Burgundy ... and on Sunday at evening [13 April] the admiral of France [Louis de Bourbon] laid siege at Boulogne; and this day, it is said, the French king shall come thither’. Anxiety about the siege was palpable. Paston continued that there ‘was a vision seen about the walls of Boulogne, as [if] it had ben a woman with a marvellous light; men deem that Our Lady there will show herself a lover to the town: God forefend [forbid] that it were French; it were worth £40,000 that it were English’. At this time of crisis many recalled the miraculous vision of the Virgin Mary seen at the time of Dagobert in 636 (com-
memorated by the church of Notre-Dame) that had led to the town becoming a place of pilgrimage, under her special protection. As his army drew up outside the walls, Louis XI was shrewd enough to claim that the Virgin was the true Lady of Boulogne, and that he came to this seaport-fortress as her vessel, to restore her rights.20

Boulogne submitted to the French king on 19 April 1477, after a six-day siege. On 3 May an inquiry was ordered by Louis XI's newly-recruited commander, the seigneur d'Esquerdes, into reports that Lord Hastings had offered the garrison help and attempted to bring English troops into the town. The details of this process survive amongst the papers of Louis's secretary, Jean Bourré (held at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), and provide telling evidence of Hastings' involvement.21

The testimony of Jean Marchant, mayor of Boulogne, opened the inquiry. He recalled that an Englishman named Reginald Clifton had come to the town on several occasions before the arrival of Louis' army. Careful to distance himself from these visits, Marchant described as rumour Clifton's information-gathering for his masters at Calais, preparatory to an offer of military help for Boulogne. Marchant then told how on the evening of Saturday 12 April, with the French army already in the suburbs, two English soldiers appeared outside the town, prominent in their red crosses of St George. Marchant said it was believed they wished to speak with the town's captain, Charles de Saveuse, and offer him 200 English soldiers as reinforcements. Marchant named Saveuse's lieutenant, Henry Hanocque, who had met with the English, but indicated that this contact was opposed by most of the townspeople. Asked whether the offer of military assistance had ever been committed to writing, and if Hastings had sent either letters to Saveuse, or other deputations, Marchant replied that he did not know.

Jean Fleury and Huchon de Beaumont, both town merchants, gave similar testimony to the mayor's. But the deposition of Robert Legaignour, Marchant's deputy, adds significantly to the story. Legaignour also described Reginald Clifton's visit two or three days before the French army reached the town (9 or 10 April) to meet urgently with Charles de Saveuse, and then provided important first-hand detail on what followed. Legaignour, as acting mayor, was at the town gate when Clifton passed through. The Englishman told him that if Boulogne needed anything from Calais, they only had to make it known and it would be provided. Then Legaignour added vital information. He remembered an earlier visit of Clifton, around mid-Lent (17 March), when he had put before the officers of the town a proposal directly authorised by Lord Hastings. Hastings wished to ascertain whether ships could be provided for an ambitious military operation, to carry to Boulogne a force of soldiers
from England. Fearing to meddle with an issue of such political importance, the officers had insisted this matter be personally communicated to Mary of Burgundy. Legaignour also confirmed the visit of English soldiers from Calais on the day the French army reached the suburbs (12 April), that they spoke in haste with Charles de Saveuse and his lieutenant Henry Hanocque, and how many believed Saveuse wanted to bring in English troops to defend the town.

A tangible sense of drama accompanies this testimony. The growing urgency felt by the Calais garrison can be readily understood. The port of Boulogne, spread out along the estuary of the Liane, and its surrounding merchants' quarters were virtually indefensible. A small flanking wall ran from the ramparts of the old Gallo-Roman town, on the plateau, offering protection from the north. However the French army was arriving from the south, and would easily skirt these defences. Tension was at its height on Saturday 12 April, when the French advance-guard occupied the merchant suburbs, or basse ville. The Calais road was still open, and the inquiry noted that English troops were able to arrive at the northern gate, the porte flamenque, and gain access to the old town (haute ville) and castle. The possibility of bringing in reinforcements from Calais lasted until the main French army under Louis de Bourbon cut all communications on the evening of the 13th.

These discussions between Calais and Boulogne ran totally against the diplomatic policy pursued by Edward IV. Edward's instructions to his ambassadors, issued on 16 February, were to demand prompt payment of the French pension, granted at Picquigny, and seek confirmation of the marriage alliance between the dauphin and Elizabeth of York. The succession-crisis in Burgundy was to be used as a lever to secure these objectives. William Lord Hastings clearly viewed the situation differently. His willingness to defy the king's wishes on a matter of such importance suggests that he had his own powerful backers at court. Since Clarence was out of favour with Edward, and able to offer scant protection, the offer of military assistance may well have been made with the approval of the king's youngest brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester. The man Hastings chose to employ on this sensitive mission, Reginald Clifton, was an experienced soldier who had been a member of the Calais garrison for nearly ten years. The offer put to Boulogne, a seaborne operation bringing in troops from England, would have required Gloucester's assent as admiral. This was just the kind of bold martial enterprise that would have appealed to him.

The townsmen who contributed to the inquiry of 3 May were concerned to play down local support for Hastings' proposal. The reality was more complex. There had been after all a short siege, which indicated at least military resistance, and a subsequent ordonnance issued by the French, levying fines for
seditious talk, suggested Burgundian loyalties remained strong. A popular ballad, the *Complainte d’Arras*, written shortly after the death of Charles the Bold, caught the mood. Arras invoked the protection of Margaret of York, whose lands were threatened by French troops, because the fragrance of her flower, the marguerite, would attract the rose of England:

Ou est la Marguerite enclose,
Qui nous gardera du dangier?
Comme bien je le presuppose,
Car son odeur atraict la rose.

(Where is the Marguerite enclosed,/who will protect us from danger?/
Why do I assume this/ Because her o:our attracts the rose.)

This motif presented Margaret as a recipient of the chivalrous support of the Yorkist dynasty, with the white rose of England to champion Burgundy against the French invaders:

Criennent tous hommes qui frennent la guerre,
Puisque la rose d’Angleterre
Est de nostre accord maintenant;
Il y sera la maintenant.

(Let all the men who make war be afraid,/since the rose of England/
is of our party now;/ he will be there soon.)

Who was the inquiry of 3 May 1477 intended for? Initially it may have been drawn up for internal circulation within Louis XI’s government. Yet the evidence it found allowed Louis to justify his delaying tactics over the marriage alliance between the dauphin and Elizabeth of York, the marriage that Edward IV’s queen and her Woodville relations so desperately desired. On 1 June he told Edward that the ample powers for a new French embassy had only been withheld because of an agreement between Margaret of York and Lord Hastings. As this agreement, or private treaty, had been made with ‘the other party’ (the duchy of Burgundy), it showed him that some of Edward’s followers were not acting in good faith. These instructions were carried to the Yorkist court by Louis’ personal ambassador. Since the accusation was so serious, the document of 3 May may have formed part of the French diplomatic bag, as supporting evidence. Such a scenario would explain Edward IV’s recall of Lord Hastings later the same month. A letter of Sir John Paston of 23 June reported Hastings’ sudden departure from Calais, explaining that he had been summoned to the king’s presence at Windsor.
Information drawn from Hastings’ Calais letter book supports this sequence of events. Early in August 1477 Hastings sent a report to Louis, which both acknowledged the French king’s anger towards him, and attempted to answer his complaints. The document made clear that serious charges had been presented to Edward IV by Louis’ ambassador in June, and that a full explanation of Hastings’ conduct was now required.30 His response dealt uneasily with the accusation that he had offered military help to Boulogne and tried to put 5-600 men into the town. Hastings gave a weak denial, saying that Louis must be badly informed, although he was forced to admit that Mary of Burgundy had appealed to him to send in troops. Presented with evidence that his soldiers had engaged with a French force at Marquise, on the Calais-Boulogne road, Hastings’ answer was unconvincing: he remained unaware if any of his men were involved. Against the broader charge that he had on a number of occasions helped the Burgundian war effort, both by land and by sea, his reply was again defensive, that he wished to remain in Edward IV’s good grace, and would never go against the wishes of his sovereign.

Hastings’ report was unable to offer an effective rebuttal of the charges made against him. Instead he relied on his close friendship and influence with Edward IV, noted by many contemporaries. He cited his record of service, how he had suffered with the king in his adversities and had been ready to sacrifice his own landed estate to join him in exile. His indignation that he might wrongfully imprison a French ambassador was real enough, and vividly expressed: *il ne le vouldroit avoir fait a ung sarrazin* (‘he would not have wished to inflict that on a heathen’).30 Yet despite his boast that the king would place little faith in the charges, it was evident that Hastings had been forced to write on Edward’s command, to reassure Louis of his full support for the treaty of Picquigny. The king wished him to make clear that his return to Calais in late July was solely for the safeguarding of the town, in view of the number of troops presently in Flanders, and to guarantee that his garrison would not initiate any military action.

Had there been a broader ‘agreement’ between Hastings and Margaret of York? Additional documentary evidence points to this. An entry on the Calais victualler’s account lists a number of pieces of artillery transported to Margaret of York on the express orders of Hastings. As this was an illicit transfer, a veiled reference was used, ‘to the Castell in the wode of Nepe in Flanderes’. A different hand added the postcript ‘longyng to my lady of Burgen’.31 The section of the account containing this reference lacks precise dating and includes a number of items from the 1470s. However it seems to fit well with the events of spring 1477, and the need to defend Margaret of York’s lands from the ravages of French troops. One of the properties granted to Margaret as part of her
dower settlement was the castle of La Motte-au-Bois, on the Flanders plain south-east of Calais, surrounded by the forest of Nieppe. This stronghold was almost certainly the ‘Castell in the wode’ referred to in the inventory. It was to become a centre of armed resistance to Louis’ invasion. The fate of Margaret’s Flemish possessions was watched with concern by the Calais garrison. A letter of one of its most experienced professional soldiers, Sir Edward Bedingfeld, reported their eventual sack by Louis XI’s army in some detail.

In his diplomatic missive of 1 June 1477 Louis insinuated that Hastings was not operating alone and had important allies within the English court. He chose to alert Edward to the ambitions of the duke of Clarence, perhaps because of the proposed marriage alliance with Mary of Burgundy, which had greatly angered the French king. As argued above, Clarence was already an isolated figure. Only Gloucester carried the necessary influence to save Lord Hastings from the consequences of these actions.

Possible illumination of the duke’s outlook is found in the military career of one of his Yorkshire followers, Sir Thomas Everingham. Gloucester had chosen him to lead the small force sent to Burgundy in the winter of 1472. Everingham seems to have remained in Burgundian service, and was with Charles the Bold at his death at Nancy in January 1477. In the following months he fought tirelessly for the Burgundians, and established a reputation for martial valour. His military action in Flanders in the summer of 1477 enjoyed at least tacit support from the Calais garrison. He later returned to England on Gloucester’s invitation, to become one of the duke’s chief advisers in the war against Scotland. Once Gloucester became king Everingham was amply rewarded: as knight of the body, lieutenant of Rysbank and naval commander. His rapid promotion suggests that Gloucester thought highly of his stalwart defence of the Burgundian duchy.

Gloucester’s support would have protected Hastings. As we have learned, he was soon restored to the captaincy of Calais, and back in his post by August. In the meantime Louis XI’s army continued its advance into Flanders unopposed. But Louis had not forgotten the conduct of the Calais garrison. On 17 August Sir Edward Bedingfeld described the French king’s fury towards Hastings, that he ‘railed greatly of my Lord to Tiger Pursuivant, openly, before 200 of his folks’. This outburst becomes understandable in the light of the Boulogne inquiry and Hastings’ subsequent report. Mary of Burgundy turned instead to Archduke Maximilian for a marriage alliance. As little immediate help could be expected from that quarter, Louis profited from the lack of military assistance to deliberately lay waste all the Flemish lands settled on Margaret of York for her dower. Edward had failed in his chivalric duty to protect his sister. After her town of Cassel was burnt by French troops she
openly reproached him, describing how she had been left 'one of the poorest widows, deserted by everyone, especially by you'.

Lord Hastings' own efforts to hinder the French advance were warmly remembered by the Burgundians. Mary of Burgundy had sent one of her most trusted servants to Calais shortly after Hastings' arrival, ensuring she was well-informed of his endeavours. In 1478 she and Maximilian sent him, in secret, a special token of their appreciation. Their magnificent 'hidden gift' consisted of five specially commissioned Bruges tapestries. It was a stark contrast to the charge of desertion made against Edward IV.

The inquiry of 3 May 1477 shows that Edward's inaction was felt keenly by others: William Lord Hastings and probably also Richard Duke of Gloucester. The hope of an expedition to Flanders in 1477 was more substantial than historians have allowed. The failure to respond to Margaret of York's appeal for help was brought home after the peace of Arras (23 December 1482), where Louis XI repudiated the undertaking given to Edward in 1475, and betrothed the Dauphin Charles to Margaret of Austria. The promised match with Elizabeth of York was now jettisoned by the French king, along with the pension agreed at Picquigny, rendering Edward's foreign policy bankrupt. The mood of disillusion in the last months of the reign was caught well by Dominic Mancini:

'that by his [Edward's] inactivity the Flemings, ancient friends, had been permanently estranged from him, whereas his foes the French had been made the stronger, so that his own subjects were disaffected, supposing that it was owing to his meanness that the Flemings had received no help from him'.

Both William Lord Hastings and Richard Duke of Gloucester had shared Edward's exile, and remained loyal throughout his reign. They were two of his most trusted servants. Yet their loyalty should not be equated with an acceptance of Edward's foreign policy or approval of his actions. An embodiment of this idea is found in the statutes of chivalric orders, which often called for a review of the life and deeds of their members. In May 1473 the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece reviewed Edward IV's own conduct and character. Amidst general praise for Edward's knightly courage and prowess, two specific and telling criticisms were made. Firstly, that he lacked foresight: it was believed that if he had gauged the political situation better he would never have been forced into exile. Secondly, and more personally, that he could be unduly passive: if those who were close to him did not praise his plans and undertakings, he did not have the confidence to execute them.
The king's laziness, and reluctance to take decisive action, may have been alluded to by Hastings as early as 1463. In a letter to the Burgundian Jean de Lannoy he praised the Nevilles for their efficient handling of the military situation in the north, whilst the king was 'at his sport and entertainment of the hunt'. Hastings' unhappiness with royal policy in 1477, and his willingness to risk opposing it, can also be seen in Richard Duke of Gloucester's actions as warden of the March two years earlier. Gloucester was critical of the peace policy towards Scotland: his failure to hold regular days of the March and redress infringements of the truce, and his implication (as lord admiral) in illegal piracy, again earned the rebuke of Edward IV.

The legacy of chivalric failure polarised attitudes to the Scottish campaign of 1482. According to the Crowland chronicler there were those at court highly critical of this expensive military commitment. This opposition is thought to have emanated from the queen's family. Hastings had a long-standing feud of his own with the Woodvilles over his captaincy at Calais. He gave the campaign his full support. In August 1482, on hearing of Gloucester's advance to Edinburgh, Hastings ordered a general procession and all the guns of Calais to be fired in celebration. He also oversaw the manufacture of ordnance for the expedition.

This common cause found powerful focus in the events of 1477. Both men had maintained close relations with Margaret of York after she had become duchess of Burgundy and wished to intervene on her behalf after the death of her husband, Charles the Bold. Their expectations of a great martial enterprise against France were to be disappointed. Edward IV's failure to send an army allowed Louis to lay waste Margaret's dower lands. Her subsequent letter to Edward, in which she accused her brother of abandoning her, was a chivalric reproach, and both Gloucester and Hastings would have been well aware of it. Their frustration enables us to understand Mancini's account of the disillusion felt at the end of Edward's reign. The king's passivity had been ill-judged. And if the ambition of his queen for a match between her daughter Elizabeth and the dauphin of France had blocked a more aggressive foreign policy, it better explains the two men's co-operation against the Woodvilles during the first month of Gloucester's protectorate.

The Manuscript
By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The original spelling has been retained. Editorial additions have been placed in square brackets. The quotation marks in Legaignour's testimony follow the form of the manuscript. All other punctuation and capitalization has been modernized.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Fr. 20494. ff. 97–98:

Enqueste faict le iij jour de may par le roy, nostre sire, au commandement de mon tres honnore et redoubte seigneur monseigneur d’Esquerdes, par Jacques Teffre bailli de B oulongne, touchant le secours que le seigneur de Hastingues devoit faire a ceulx de B oulongne, contre la personne ou armee du roy, et quelles offres ou promesses il leur avoit fait par avant la reddition de la ville; et premier la depossition de Jehan Marchant, mayeur de ladite ville, escripte et signee de sa main, comme il appert.

Jehan Marchant, aage de environ L ans; oy en ladite enqueste, dit et depoose par le serment qu’il a a Dieu et au roy, que touchant les promesses faictes par le sieur de Hastingues et ceulx de B oulongne, il n’en savoir parler au vray; mais a bien memoire qu’il a veu venir plusieurs foys en la ville ung angloys nomme Regnault Clifton, et disoit-on en voix commune que ledit Regnault venoit pour oyr des nouvelles; aussi pour savoir si ceulx de B oulongne avoient a faire de choses que les seigneurs de Calays peussent. Et dit outre que le samedi [12 April] que l’armee du roy se loga au bourg de B oulongne environ le soir, veu le devant nomme, devant entrer en B oulongne deux compagnions angloys portant la rouge croix, lesquelx demandoyent pour messire Charles de Saveuses, qui estoit lors cappitaine de la ville et du chasteau et qu’ilz avoyent charge de parler a luy; quelle chose ilz besongnerent avcc ledit messire Charles il ne scet, lors que la renommee estoit que on vouloit bouter ijc angloys en B oulongne, de quoy le peuple estoit fort esmeu, et s’il dist, que Henry Hanocque mena lesdits deux archers es brayes de ladite ville, de quoy le peuple n’estoit point content. Interrogue s’il scet point que le seigneur de Hastingues ait envoye nulles lettres audit messire Charles, n’y a aultres personnages de la ville, dit que non et plus n’en scet.

Jehan Fleury, marchant et bourgoys de B oulongne, et aage de xlviis ans ou environ, oy par serment en ladite enqueste, en deppose comme ledit Jehan Marchant, sauf qu’il ne scet point qui mena les deux angloys es brayes, mais bien le y vit, dont le peuple n’estoit point content. Interrogue pareillement s’il scet point que monseigneur de Hastingues ait escript nulles lettres au capptaine ou officiers de la ville, ne a nulz autres, dit que non de quoy il ait connoissance, mais a bien memoire que il a veu venir plusieurs foys Regnault Clifton et plusieurs autres compagnions de guerre de Calays, lesquieulx s’adressoient tous a messire Charles et Henri Hanocque, mais quelles choses ilz avoyent a besongner ensemble ne scet. Et plus ne scet.

Huchon de Beaumont, bourgoys de ladite ville, aage de xxx ans ou environ, en deppose comme ledit Jehan Fleury.

Robert Legaignour, marchant et bourgoys de B oulongne, et lieutenant de Jehan Marchant, mayeur de la ville, oy par serment en ladite enqueste, dit et
dépose par le serment qu’il a a Dieu et au roy que il ne scet point que le seigneur de Hastingues ait fait nulles offres de secours a la ville de Boulogne, ne de bouche ne de escript, de quoy il ait eu connoissance, mais dit bien que environ deux ou troys jours devant que l’armee du roy venoist devant Boulogne, vit venir a Boulogne ung angloys nomme Regnault Clifton, lequel vit fort parler a messire Charles, quelle chose ilz parloient ensemble ne scet, mais quant ledit Regnault se partit de Boulogne, ledit depposant estoit a la porte comme mayeur de la ville, et Regnault luy dist ces motz, ou en substance « Monsieur le mayeur, je vueil parler a vous: si vous avez a faire de chose que nous ayons a Calais, le signiffiez a nous et vous l’avez sans nulle doubte », sans que il luy declarest qu’il eust charge du seigneur de Hastingues, ne d’autre seigneur, de dire ces motz. Oultre, a bien memoire que environ le my-caresme [17 March], ledit Regnault vint a Boulogne vers les officiers, et proposa ledit Regnault que il avoit charge du seigneur de Hastingues, son maistre, a communiquer avec les officiers de Boulogne pour savoir si leur plaisir seroit de bailler les navires de Boulogne pour aller querir des gens d’armes en Angleterre: a quoy luy fut respondu subitement par tous les officiers que il allast vets Mademoiselle de Bourgongne, et que de telles matieres ils ne se mesleroient point.

Oultre fut interrogue le jour [12 April] que l’armee du Roy se loga au bourg, et que il vint deux angloys et ung poursuivant de Calays, s’il ne receut nulle lettres du seigneur de Hastingues ne d’autres pour avoir secours, dit, par serment qu’il a fait, que non, mais vit bien entrer les troys angloys, lesquieulx demandoyent a grant haste le cappitaine, et parla et communiqua fort avec eux messires Charles et Henry Hanocque, et qu’il saiche quelle chose ilz conclurent ensemble, ne scet, car il n’y fut point appelle; mais la renommee estoit que le cappitaine vouloit bouter en Boulogne angloys, ce que il n’eust point souffert de tout le peuple, pour tant qu’il eust peu resister contre. Interrogue si messire Charles lui dist point qu’il vouloit bouter les angloys en Boulogne, dit que non, lors que la renommee est telle, et mesme que ses gens en faisoient courre la voix. Et sur tout vera ce qu’il peut savoir.

Translation

An enquiry held on 3 May by the king, our lord, under the command of my most honoured and dread lord monsieur d’Esquerdes, by Jacques Teffre, bailiff of Boulogne, concerning the aid which the lord Hastings was alleged to have given to the people of Boulogne, against the person or army of the king, and concerning what offers or promises he had made to them before the surrender of the town; and firstly the deposition of Jehan Marchant, mayor of the said town, written and signed in his hand, as it appears.
Jehan Marchant, aged around 50 years, heard in the said enquiry, says and deposes on the oath he has taken to God and to the king, that on the matter of the promises made by the lord Hastings and the people of Boulogne, he cannot speak with any veracity; but as far as he can remember he saw an Englishman named Reginald Clifton come into the town several times, and it was commonly said that the said Reginald came to gather news; and also to learn whether the people of Boulogne had any need of things which the lords of Calais could provide. And he says further that on the Saturday [12 April] when the king's army lodged in the bourg of Boulogne towards evening, the afore-said previously saw two English comrades bearing the red cross enter Boulogne, who asked for my lord Charles de Saveuse, who was then captain of the town and castle, and said that they were charged with speaking to him; what business they had with my said lord Charles he does not know, although the rumour was that there was a wish to forcibly station 200 Englishmen in Boulogne, at which the people were greatly dismayed, and moreover he saw, as he says, that Henry Hanocque led the said two archers to the defences of the said town, at which the people were not at all happy. Asked if he has any knowledge of whether the lord Hastings sent any letters to my said lord Charles, or to other notables of the town, he says no, and that he does not know any more about it.

Jehan Fleury, merchant and burgess of Boulogne, and aged 48 years or thereabouts, heard on oath in the said enquiry, deposes as the said Jehan Marchant does on this matter, except that he does not know who led the two Englishmen to the defences, but he certainly saw it, and the people were not at all happy about it. Asked likewise if he has any knowledge of whether my lord Hastings wrote any letters to the captain or officers of the town, or to any others, he says not that he has any knowledge of, but as far as he can remember he saw Reginald Clifton and a number of other comrades of his from Calais come several times, who always addressed themselves to my lord Charles and to Henry Hanocque, but what business they had together he does not know. And he does not know any more.

Huchon de Beaumont, burgess of the said town, aged 30 years or thereabouts, deposes as the said Jehan Fleury does on this matter.

Robert Legaignour, merchant and burgess of Boulogne, and lieutenant of Jehan Marchant, mayor of the town, heard on oath in the said enquiry, says and deposes on the oath which he has taken to God and to the king that he does not know that the lord Hastings made any offers of aid to the town of Boulogne, either orally or in writing, of which he had any knowledge, but he does say that about two or three days before the king's army came before Boulogne, he saw an Englishman named Reginald Clifton come to Boulogne,
whom he saw in deep discussion with my lord Charles, what they spoke of together he does not know, but when the said Reginald left Boulogne, the said witness was at the gate as mayor of the town, and Reginald said these words to him, or something like them: 'Monsieur mayor, I would like to speak with you: if you need anything which we have at Calais, let us know and you will certainly have it', without saying to him that he was charged by the lord Hastings, or by any other lord, with saying these words. Moreover, as far as he can remember, at around mid-Lent [17 March] the said Reginald came to Boulogne, to the officers, and the said Reginald said that he was charged by the lord Hastings, his master, to speak with the officers of Boulogne, to know if it would be their pleasure to send the ships of Boulogne to go to fetch men-at-arms from England: to which all the officers immediately replied that he should go to Mademoiselle of Burgundy [Mary of Burgundy], and that they would not meddle in such matters.

He was further questioned about the day [12 April] when the king’s army lodged in the bourg, and when two Englishmen and a pursuivant came from Calais, if he received any letters from lord Hastings or from others to receive aid, and he says, on the oath he has given, no, but he did see the three Englishmen enter, who asked in great haste for the captain, and my lords Charles and Henry Hanocque spoke and discussed at length with them, and as to whether he knows what they decided together, he does not, because he was not summoned; but the rumour was that the captain wanted to forcibly station Englishmen in Boulogne, which the entire people would certainly not have allowed, insofar as they could resist it. Asked if my lord Charles did not say to him that he wanted to forcibly station the Englishmen in Boulogne, he said no, although that was the rumour, and even that his men had spread it abroad. And finally, that is all he knows.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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6. Ibid., pp. 7–8.


8. C. Weightman, Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446–1503, Gloucester 1989, p. 120.


10. The rumour of Gloucester leading the army is found in Calendar of State Papers, Milan, vol. 1, ed. A.B. Hinds, London 1912, p. 163. The material on Gloucester recruiting captains and archers for Burgundy is drawn from PRO, E405/55, r. 1 (which I owe to Dr David Grummitt). Gloucester indented with the leaders, Thomas Everingham and John Pilkington, on 14 November 1472: they were to serve the duke of Burgundy for three months. John Green, usher of the duke’s chamber and controller of the Hull customs, distributed the money. This evidence contradicts the view of Scofield, Edward the Fourth, vol. 2, p. 40, that no force was ever sent. The crucial role played by Gloucester has not previously been known.


14. Hastings responded to Louis on 10 May 1477, saying that the king was in good health, ‘et ce jour tient la feste de son ordre de la jarettiere au lieu acoustume en son chastel de Wyndesore’. The reference is taken from Lord Hastings’ Calais letter book: Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California, HA 13879, f. 4r. The letter book, of eight folios, covers the period from 13 April–18 September 1477. It is badly damaged in places and I am grateful to Ed Meek both for discussing the letter book with me and making available his transcripts of some of the material. It forms a major new source for the period.

15. A garter feast was indeed held at Windsor on 10 May. According to J. Anstis, The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, 2 vols (London, 1724), vol. 1, p. 200, the king was present. However information drawn from Dalton’s Garter Book (Carew-Poole MS. CG G2/18, f. 76) provides a different story. The garter feast was originally to be held at Windsor on 23 April 1477. It instead took place where the king was in residence, at ‘St John’s’, over 22–24 April, presumably because Edward could not travel. A separate feast was then held at Windsor on 10 May, but the king was unable to attend, and sent a proxy. If this material is correct it substantiates the rumours that Edward was suffering ill-health as early as spring 1477. I am grateful to Dr. Hannes Kleineke for discussing this question with me, and drawing my attention to the above, from Diethard Schneider, Der englische Hosenbandorden. Beiträge zur Entstehung und Entwicklung des ‘The most noble Order of the Garter’ (1348–1702) mit einem Ausblick bis 1983, 2 vols in 4, Bonn 1988, vol. 1, part 1, p. 356; vol. 2, part 1, p. 162.


24. Reginald Clifton had crossed to Calais in the retinue of the earl of Warwick ten years earlier: BL, Add. MS. 46455, f. 61v.


29. Henry Huntington Library, HA 13879, ff. 6r–7r.

30. Ibid., f. 6r. The comment was made in the third person because it was delivered to Louis by Hastings' secretary William Laverok. It was drafted in the form of a credence or aide-mémoire. Laverok later became diplomatic envoy to Edward IV: Calmette and Périnelle, Louis XI et l'Angleterre, pp. 252–55, 370, 392–94.


35. PRO, E405/55, r.1; C1/60/167.

36. E. Meek, 'The career of Sir Thomas Everingham “Knight of the North” in the service of Maximilian duke of Austria 1477–1481', Historical Research (forthcoming). I am grateful to Ed Meek for making a copy of this paper available to me. Additional information on the support Everingham received from Calais has been provided by Dr Grummitt from PRO, E101/55/10, f. 2.
37. E. Meek, ‘The career of Sir Thomas Everingham’.
43. Livia Visser-Fuchs has kindly drawn my attention to this material, from the Vienna Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. It is cited in Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, “Chevalerie . . . in som partie is worthi for to be comendid, and in some part to ben amendid”: chivalry and the Yorkist kings, in St George’s Chapel in the Later Middle Ages, ed. E. Scarff and C.L. Richmond forthcoming September 2001.
46. Crowland Chronicle, p. 149.
48. Richard Duke of Gloucester had paid a three-day visit to his sister Margaret of York at Lille (12–14 February 1471) before rejoining Edward IV and sailing for England. He also stayed with Margaret at Saint-Omer (14–18 July 1475) whilst Edward was entertaining the duke of Burgundy at Calais. Duchess Margaret personally received Lord Hastings at Le Crotoy on 12 September 1471: H. Vander Linden, Itinéraires de Charles, duc de Bourgogne, Marguerite d’York et Marie de Bourgogne, 1467–77, Brussels 1936, pp. 28, 34, 68.