NATIONAL UNITY AND COMMON CAUSE:
THE ENGLISH POLITICAL COMMUNITY, 1327-77

A Thesis
Presented as Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
with a
Major in History
in the
College of Graduate Studies
University of Idaho
by
Steven Carter

Major Professor: Ellen Kittell, Ph.D.
Committee Members: Tara MacDonald, Ph.D.; Alyson Roy, Ph.D.
Department Administrator: Ellen Kittell, Ph.D.

December 2020

AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT THESIS

This thesis of Steven Carter, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in History and titled "National Unity and Common Cause: The English Political Community, 1327-77," has been reviewed in final form. Permission as indicated by the signatures and dates below, is now granted to submit final copies to the College of Graduate Studies for approval.

Major Professor: _____   Date: _____
                                Ellen Kittell, Ph.D.

Committee Members: _____   Date: _____
                                Alyson Roy, Ph.D.

                                _____   Date: _____
                                Tara MacDonald, Ph.D.

Department
Administrator: _____   Date: _____
                                Ellen Kittell, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Civil war and military incompetence were a mainstay in England for nearly two decades by the start of Edward III's majority reign in 1330. Moreover, money contracts were beginning to replace the feudal oath, and the gentry and merchants were gaining more economic power. England faced crucial domestic challenges and fundamental societal evolution at a time when Scotland and France remained troubling matters of national concern. I argue that the idea of a national cause – a belief that the kingdom writ large was united in pursuing a common objective – emerged out of a fusion of political harmony, chivalric cultural revival, and national victory. The policy of political harmony undertaken in the 1330s demanded a forgiving, generous policy of royal patronage and cooperation with the gentry and merchants of England. It was fundamental for the Crown to harness the support of the entire political community for a cause in which they all took part. That the triumphalism in the wake of Edward III's great victories would ultimately be undercut and confronted by the events of the 1360s and 1370s was a testament to the fundamental role that national unity played in creating an environment that could facilitate the emergence of a national cause. A national cause meant that, in mid-fourteenth-century England, a bond was forged between ruler and realm that united royal and national interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

FORMATION OF A NATIONAL CAUSE

Introduction

The fourteenth-century English poet Laurence Minot, reflecting on the English victory over the Scots at Halidon Hill, writes "Of Ingland had my hert grete care."[1] Writing of Edward III's 1338 campaign in France, he prays that "Ihesus saue all Ingland and blis it with is haly hand."[2] Minot likely came from a gentry family of northern England, and was probably among those who fought in the English army between the 1330s and 1340s. His sentiment for "Ingland" speaks to a notion that has largely been within the purview of literary historians, many of whom have based their argument primarily on Middle English romances, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, or Laurence Minot's war ballads.[3] Only recently have scholars of political and social history explored the idea that a person living in England in the fourteenth century may have conceived of England as a "nation" encompassing particular customs and traditions.[4]

The purpose of this study is to investigate the spirit of national unity and common cause within those who make up the political community as corporately representative of the *populus* of fourteenth-century England.[5] The role of political, martial, and spiritual

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[1] Laurence Minot, *The Poems of Laurence Minot*, ed. Joseph Hall (England: Clarendon Press, 1897), 1. The battle of Halidon Hill was fought in 1333.

[2] Minot, *Poems*, 10.

[3] Middle English romances include *King Horn*, *Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick,* and others.

[4] Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in Fourteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). This argument is fundamental to Ruddick's study.

[5] Note on the meaning of "political community": Mark Ormrod describes the political community as the "great men of the realm represented by the Lords in parliament; the country gentry, and merchant communities who direct local affairs and controlled the commons in parliament; and the ministers of the Crown in the great offices of state" (Mark Ormrod, "Edward III and the Recovery of Royal Authority in England, 1340-60," in *History* (London 72, no. 234, 1987: 4-19), 5). Working from this framework, the political community – or the "community of the realm," includes dukes, earls, barons, knights and other country gentry, office-holding burgesses, London city officials, influential English merchants, and members of the English church: archbishops, bishops, and abbots. Each of these can be considered to possess a degree of influence on the mechanisms of social control in England.

components have been understated with respect to the development of English sentiment, and outshone by focuses on literature and art. I argue that it was a fusion of political harmony, chivalric cultural revival, and national victory that contributed to the evolution of English self-awareness among the political community between 1327 and 1377.[6]

At the heart of this study is the dynamic of one's loyalty to the king and one's loyalty to crown and kingdom.[7] Another important element to this study is the difference between the personal nature of the king and the impersonal nature of the Crown, which represents the constituted authority or dominion wielded and possessed by the king. In England, the king did not create the law as much as the law made the king. As I lay out in the second chapter, the English political community was faced with an unprecedented situation in 1327 that resulted in the deposition of Edward II. As an act of Parliament, the king was replaced by his son, Edward of Windsor.[8] While these barons were not revolutionaries seeking to question the legitimacy of the king, they *were* questioning the ability of the king – Edward II – to effectively rule.[9]

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[6] Note on the meaning of "chivalric culture": I will be working from Juliet Vale's definition, which defined it as "the expression – whether of activities such as tournaments and games, or in literary tastes, objects of devotion and artistic form – of social assumptions which ostensibly set a premium upon distinctively knightly values and behaviour" (Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270-1350* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1982), 1).

[7] Note on the use of "Crown": throughout this study, I will use the upper-case "Crown" when referencing the authority of the king as at once meant to include, yet also distinct from, the king's person. The "Crown" embodies the ruling, governing authority that is exercised by the king and his ministers. When used lower-case, it refers to the physical circlet as a symbol of the king. Ernst Kantorowicz examines the evolution of the idea of the king's person and the king's office and authority (Crown) in *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[8] Note on the use of "Parliament" and "parliament": when considering the institution of Parliament, I will use the upper-case form. When referring to "parliament" in the general sense of a meeting of the lords and commons, I will use the lower-case. Because Edward III was only thirteen-years-old, his mother, Queen Isabella, remained his guardian. Edward was born at Windsor in 1312. He reigned between 1327 and 1377, although 1327-1330 were years of his minority.

[9] Note on the use of "magnates," "barons," and "nobles", throughout this chapter, and the entire paper, I interchange between these three nouns to describe the landed nobility of the kingdom of England. In summary, they denote secular lords, but may also connotate lords spiritual (bishops, archbishops, and abbots).

After setting the political and economic context of the early-mid-fourteenth century, I argue that the synergy of the intersection of the politics of consensus with a shared interest in chivalric culture produced, for the first time, a sense of national unity for a common cause, most clearly expressed in the success of the mid-century French wars. Central to this claim is the argument that political harmony was realized *before* the English campaigns in the 1340s. Following the seismic victories of 1346/7, however, it only led to a more deeply-rooted feeling of a collective enterprise. The behavior of the English political community in the 1350s to the final years of Edward III's reign shows that a sense of pride had settled in the memory of the political elite, even as their sense of triumphalism was no longer being reaffirmed on the battlefield. This sense of national unity and common cause originally emerged out of a policy of political reconciliation and cooperation refined by a common identity with chivalric culture. It was then manifest in victories of national significance and propagated by official rhetoric. The sense of a national cause – the idea that the kingdom writ large was united and directed towards a common objective – began to wane in the 1360s only to largely disappear by the end of Edward III's reign. However, a sense of English self-awareness had endured. It was enshrined in the Order of the Garter, expressed in nostalgic triumphalism, and emergent with St George as a national symbol of the English warrior spirit.

Historiography

It is necessary to set the scholarly framework for this study before going any further. For fundamental historical context, I have drawn from the contemporary chroniclers Jean Froissart, Thomas Gray, Geoffrey le Baker, Jean le Bel, Adam Murimuth, and Robert of Avesbury.[10] While these chroniclers provide historical narrative, they share discrepancies

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[10] Jean Froissart, *The Chronicles of Froissart*, ed. John Bourchier and G.C. Macaulay (London, New York: Macmillan and Macmillan, 1899); Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: 1272-1363*, trans. Andy King (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press; Surtees Society, 2005); Geoffrey Le Baker, *The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker*, ed. David Preest and Richard Barber (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2012); Jean Le Bel, *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2011); Adam Murimuth, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum. Robertus De Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii,* ed. and trans. Edward Maunde Thompson (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Vi Scriptores;

concerning the historical timeline and some, like Froissart, are sometimes overly attuned to decorating certain figures or events with flowery language. The fourteenth century was a time when it was becoming normal for literate laymen to pen chronicles, a duty traditionally left to members of the Church. Froissart, Gray, and le Baker were secular laymen. Le Bel was a French canon. Murimuth was an English cleric, but wrote his chronicle in his retirement from the papal *curia* at Avignon. Avesbury was English, and was most likely a canon who worked at Canterbury.[11] My references to government documents, such as *Patent Rolls* and *Close Rolls,* are drawn from the Hathitrust Digital Library.[12]

Contemporary scholarship on fourteenth-century England with an eye towards the culture of the nobility and notions of English self-awareness has only recently begun to face analysis from scholars of political, cultural, and social history. When one studies the possible overlap of notions of English identity during Edward III's reign, they primarily rely on literature and the role of language in society. Thorlac Turville-Petre, Adrian Hastings, Kathy Lavezzo, and Timothy Guard exemplify this approach. However, I have been most influenced by the work of Andrea Ruddick, whose recent study on political culture in fourteenth-century England attempts to break-away from ideas of "nation" and "identity" being litigated in a court of literary sources and instead, drawing from political sources: government documents, parliamentary speeches, and sermons. For a survey of where the scholarship stands on the core matters of political harmony, chivalric cultural revival, and national victory during

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93. London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Off., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889). The chronicles of Murimuth and Avesbury are untranslated from Latin.

[11] Besides Murimuth and Avesbury, each of these chroniclers wrote in French, one of the dominant court languages of Europe. The fourteenth century was an era when vernacular languages were beginning to exceed the dominance of Latin. Froissart, Gray, Le Baker, and Le Bel all wrote in French.

[12] This proved to be an obstacle because many primary sources were inaccessible or lately retrieved. *Patent Rolls* for the years 1327-77 are accessible via Hathitrust. Access to *Close Rolls* is limited via Hathitrust. *Parliamentary Rolls* and *Treaty Rolls* for the relevant years were not directly accessible, and are therefore drawn from secondary sources that reference them. My ability to translate Latin has been put to use in deciphering certain texts. However, since my familiarity with Latin is far from adept, there are several untranslated sources that would have contributed to this study that I simply did not possess the time to translate and analyze. *Foedera*, a several volume collection including speeches, sermons, and diplomatic messages from English history is the primary example of this. Difficulty in accessing a translated version of Henry Knighton's *Chronicon* proved to be limiting on drawing from all known chronicles from the period.

Edward III's reign, I have found that a thematic historiographic survey is the most appropriate way to frame this study. Each thematic subject is chronological. I will begin by surveying works on English identity in fourteenth-century England, followed by scholarship on the English nobility, Edward III, and fourteenth-century English chivalry.

Thorlac Turville-Petre's *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* has served somewhat as a benchmark for studies on English national identity and sentiment of the fourteenth century.[13] The 1990s were a time when scholars began to revisit national identity. The historical connotations that inevitably arise, however, present an obstacle to studies of "nation" and "identity" because scholars debate whether the term "nationalism" can even be applicable to the pre-modern world. For much of the twentieth century, the role of national identity and national sentiment has been ignored by scholars because of the inherent challenges in discussing anything relating to the word "nation" that precedes the Enlightenment or subscribes to a Whiggist interpretation.[14]

England the Nation takes the view that there was already a sense of national identity in England *before* the Hundred Years War and that it came as a result of continental commerce. The bulk of his evidence is contemporary literature. It has been a mainstay in medievalist scholarship to say that the Hundred Years War was the catalyst for the formation of English identity, due primarily to emergent "anti-French prejudice." However, if we are to take every example of any rhetoric that disparages another people group, then there are as many nations as there are people groups.

For example, McKisack concludes in *The Fourteenth Century* (1959) that perhaps the most "lasting and significant consequences of the war should be sought, perhaps, in the sphere of national psychology...the victories were the victories, not only of the king and the nobility, but of the nation."[15] Whereas McKisack concludes that it was as a result of the English

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[13] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996).

[14] Zoltán Boldizsár Simon. "Historicism and Constructionism: Rival Ideas of Historical Change." *History of European Ideas* 45, no. 8 (2019): 1171-1190. The Whiggist view may be termed the historicist view (dominant in the nineteenth century), which interprets the present as a development out of past conditions.

[15] May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century: 1307-1399*. Oxford History of England (Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1959), 150. The Oxford History of England series is considered a part of the "canonical interpretations" which also includes *The Oxford Illustrated History of*

victories that led to this development of national triumph, I would assert that such an idea was already evident in the behavior and actions of Edward III and the political community *before* they set out and achieved those victories.

Adrian Hastings' *The Construction of Nationhood* (1997) explores notions of "nation" and "nationhood" in the Middle Ages.[16] He focuses on the modern conception that derive the *natio* as shared language, ethnicity, customs, and religion, and argues that England is the proto-type for the nation-state of the nineteenth century. Hastings' argument provides a fitting starting point for scholarship that has investigated notions of English "nationalism." The study of English identity and notions of the medieval nation has been, as Andrea Ruddick notes, primarily the work of literary historians.[17]

Imagining a Medieval English Nation, a collection of essays edited by Kathy Lavezzo, theorizes on the notion of the medieval English *natio*.[18] Written in 2004, it is a necessary follow-up to the studies of Hastings and Turville-Petre that includes scholars who explore the idea of "nation" in the fourteenth century.[19] Many of the essays' subject-matter indicate the study of fourteenth-century concepts of "nation" and "identity" to rely primarily on literary sources and language. Lavezzo notes that *Imagining a Medieval English Nation* "embraces the wide variety of possible relationships between the present and the past, relationships that cannot be described adequately through either Whiggism or constructionism. Thus while some essays point to aspects of medieval English nationalism that look toward the modern nation, others address concepts of the nation that were not adopted in later periods."[20] Each

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Medieval Europe (ed. George Holmes, 1988), and *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (ed. Michael Jones, Volume VI, 2000).

[16] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[17] Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture,* 19.

[18] Kathy Lavezzo, ed. *Imagining a Medieval English Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004). *Natio* meaning "tribe, race, or people" from Latin.

[19] Thorlac Turville-Petre writes that "in times of fear and discontent, nationalism is able to provide reassurance to a society anxious about its identity and cohesion" (Thorlac Turville-Petre, "Afterward: The Brutus Prologue to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight."* in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo, 341).

[20] Lavezzo, *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, xix.

study attempts to thread the needle of avoiding the Whiggist and constructionist school of thought.[21]

Timothy Guard's *Chivalry, Kingship, and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (2013) explores the crossover between kingly and spiritual duty. Guard argues that Edward III's ambitions in France came about as a result of his earlier failed attempts to embark on a crusade to the Holy Land.[22] His argument looks at the tone of moral authority that is a feature of Edward III's official rhetoric. Guard focuses on Edward III's devotion to the life and legacy of Louis the Saint, the mythically beloved king of France who went on crusade, and from whom Edward could trace his royal lineage to the French throne. Guard argues that English arms served "as vehicles for national and royal pride, but also as compensation for frustrated national crusade ambitions."[23] Key to Guard's argument is the prioritization of religious motivation. He sees the French wars as an outworking of certain political prophecies. One political prophecy Guard investigates, *The Last Kings of the English,* tells of Edward III's destiny of attaining Jerusalem. Guard's study is most instructive because of his focus on political, moral, and religious sources, not primarily literary sources.

Andrea Ruddick's *English Identity and Political Culture in Fourteenth Century England* was published the same year as *Chivalry, Kingship, and Crusade*. Ruddick, like Lavezzo, is careful to convey that she is attempting to contribute to the "growing debate" on the origin of states, nations, and nationalism in Europe without falling into what she calls a "self-perpetuating platitude" in modern scholarship that understands nationalism to be strictly a modern phenomenon.[24] While she also criticizes scholarship that simply "finds what it is looking for," Ruddick says that her attempt is to remain on the narrow thread that examines

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[21] Zoltán Boldizsár Simon. "Historicism and Constructionism: Rival Ideas of Historical Change." The constructionist view, dominant in the latter half of the twentieth century, as Simon says, understands the present as a recent invention of historical environments. The fact that Ruddick, Lavezzo, and others wish to shy away from the competing Whiggist and constructionist schools of methodology shows the current trend of viewing these methodologies as restrictive and unhelpful.

[22] Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell & Brewer, 2013).

[23] Lavezzo, *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, 196.

[24] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture,* 2.

ideas of nation and English identity on their own terms that are not restricted to modern connotations.[25]

Ruddick notes that studies of nationality and national identity have always been primarily under the purview of literary historians like Turville-Petre and not scholars who consider official governmental records and messages.[26] Likewise, she notes that far too much attention is given to the role of English as a vernacular language.[27] Ruddick was the most instructive work for many of the themes I examine in this thesis. Her emphasis on exploring the political culture pairs well with my focus on Edward III and the political community. Because of the nuance that such a study requires, Ruddick dedicates a good amount to providing context and definitions. She defines political culture as the "conventions, values and assumptions that inform and condition political activity in a given time and place and the repertoire of language and media used to express them."[28] She notes that political culture as a subject is new and serves as an attempt to "restore an ideological framework to medieval English political history," and push back against older scholarly emphases on the role of self-interest and patronage as the driving force of politics.[29]

Moreover, Ruddick articulates the idea that her study is not meant to overemphasize the role of national sentiment in the political behavior and actions in fourteenth-century English political history. Indeed, she notes that other factors include "vocational, regional, political, familial, individual," and that the very notion of "national" was not yet theorized.[30] Instead, she approaches "national sentiment" as "one particular recurrent theme" in political culture, and that this notion has been far too marginalized by political and cultural

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[25] Ruddick, 49.
[26] Geraldine Heng's compelling 2003 study (*Empire of Magic*) on the politics of cultural fantasy draws on literary and pseudo-historical sources for her exploration of how medieval romance helped shape real-world identity and social expectations.
[27] Ardis Butterfield (*The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War,* 2013) is effective in deconstructing the view that tends to lend far too much credence to the school of thought that emphasizes the growing anglophonic tradition in English political culture in the fourteenth century. Butterfield notes that while it is true that the English language was on the rise and was becoming more prominent, it has been blown out of proportion. French (and the Low Countries) language and culture was still highly influential during the period of the Hundred Years War.
[28] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, 21.
[29] Ruddick, 22.
[30] Ruddick, 49.

historians.[31] Her primary sources, then, stem from documents of government records and rhetoric, and show how national sentiment was a factor within the political culture in fourteenth-century England.

Studies that explore Edward III and the English nobility include K.B. McFarlane's *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (1980), Chris Given-Wilson's *The English Nobility in the Later Middle Ages* (1996), Mark Ormrod's *The Reign of Edward III* (2000), and James Bothwell's *Edward III and the English Peerage* (2004).[32] Each of these works explores the state of the English nobility during Edward III's reign and acts of royal patronage.

Given-Wilson's *English Nobility* serves as an update to McFarlane's earlier work, and shows an English nobility that at once is concerned with national matters, but that is primarily concerned with ruling over their respective regions. Ormrod, as the premier Edward III scholar, gives a positive view of Edward III's relationship with the nobility and the commons. Bothwell's more recent study is critical of recent works on Edward III's relationship to the nobility and argues that Edward was far more shrewd and calculating than what scholars typically describe, and that his policy of royal patronage was borne more out of self-preservation of the monarchy than a stable recovery of royal authority. All of these studies show that scholarship concerning domestic harmony during Edward III's reign have been rather consistent over recent decades.

Earlier studies that explore Edward III and his relationship to the nobility from the nineteenth and early-mid twentieth century have been very critical of Edward III. William Stubbs (*Constitutional History of England*, 1906) and Charles Plummer of the nineteenth century hold that domestic unity was only struck because of Edward III's grasping want for war funds and that he always dealt from a position of weakness with the increasingly powerful gentry. Similarly, May McKisack and Bryce Lyon have been critical of Edward III

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[31] Ibid.

[32] K. B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1980); Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility of the Later Middle Ages: The Fourteenth-Century Political Community* (London; New York; Routledge, 1996); Mark Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III* (Stroud, Gloucestershire; Charleston, S.C.: Tempus Pub., 2000); James Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage: Royal Patronage, Social Mobility, and Political Control in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004).

for financial recklessness and argue that domestic peace was a positive development, but mostly a product of the lords and commons. More recent scholarship, epitomized by Mark Ormrod (*The Reign of Edward III* and *Edward III*) revises this stance to assert that Edward III was a far more adept politician.[33]

Studies that examine chivalry in Edward III's era include Juliet Vale's *Edward III and Chivalry* (1982)*,* Nigel Saul's *For Honour and Fame* (2011) and *Chivalry in Medieval England* (2011) Richard Barber's *Edward III and the Triumph of England* (2014), and Philip Caudrey's *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry in the Age of the Hundred Years War* (2019). Each of these examines the chivalry in the fourteenth century.

Juliet Vale's *Edward III and Chivalry* was monumental and is frequently cited in many other studies because of its rich, original content.[34] Her argument is that the chivalric activities of the Edwardian era were greatly influenced by courts of the Low Countries – such as Hainaut and Flanders – and Edward III's court was far more interested in the cosmopolitan court culture of the Continent than many historians are willing to admit.[35]

Nigel Saul is likely the most widely-read scholar over the past three decades, with his 1997 study *Age of Chivalry: Art and Society in Late Medieval England*, followed by a pair of books published in 2011: *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500*, and *Chivalry in Medieval England*.[36] Saul owes much of his own study to Maurice Keen (*Chivalry*, 1984) who, in Saul's words, "rescued chivalry from the hands of lyrical escapists

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[33] Mark Ormrod, *Edward III*. Yale English Monarchs (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). The biography of *Edward III* was an invaluable source for this study, and the *magnum opus* of the late Mark Ormrod (1957-2020). Ormrod's *Edward III* attempts to locate the middle-ground and avoid relying on the precedent of preceding biographies. He avoids the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century studies of Edward III in which he is judged as reckless, selfish, and ostentatious (Longman, *Life and times of Edward the Third*, 1869; Warburton, *Edward III*, 1875; Mackinnon, *The History of Edward III*, 1900). Likewise, he avoids the overly heroic and dramatic tone of more recent biographies (Barnes, *The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III*, 2006).

[34] Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270-1350* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1982).

[35] Malcolm Vale picks up on this argument in *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270-1380* (2001).

[36] Nigel Saul, *Age of Chivalry: Art and Society in Late Medieval England* (Brockhampton Press, 1995); Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500* (London: Bodley Head, 2011).

and placed it firmly in the forefront of medieval studies."[37] In his two most recent books on English chivalry, Saul argues that Edward III sought to connect chivalric culture and the English monarchy, and this closer accommodation helped inform notions of medieval kingship. He rejects not only the anachronism of Victorian-era historians but also much of twentieth-century scholarship that held that chivalry was merely an excuse for war and violence.

Richard Barber has been a leading scholar of medieval knighthood for several decades. He has a particular focus on King Arthur's influence on the history of medieval England. His 1995 study, *The Knight and Chivalry,* picks up on an earlier version from 1970, when chivalry was largely neglected in the realm of medieval studies.[38] Unlike Keen's study on chivalry, Barber focuses a little more on the knight and the role of literature, which inevitably gives a more luminous interpretation of medieval chivalry. His recent book, *Edward III and the Triumph of England: The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter* (2014), markets itself as the first attempt at describing the world in which the Order of the Garter emerged.[39] He first provides the background of Edward III and Crécy, and then the formation of the order and the formula for the selection of its founding members. Because of its focus on the most successful period of Edward III's reign, it paints a picture of a triumphant English knighthood with few weaknesses.

The argument of Philip Caudrey's *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry in the Age of the Hundred Years War* has been more pertinent to this study than much of its content. Published in 2019, *Military Society* is a recent example of more focused studies derived from monographs of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s that looked at chivalry more generally.[40] Caudrey attempts to take one aspect of the subject of chivalry and examine it at a macro-level. By exploring the various courts of chivalry – founded to judge the proper possession of who

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[37] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 2011), vii-viii. Keen's *Chivalry* was the first book to treat medieval chivalry as its own subject.

[38] Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Rev. ed. Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell Press, 1995).

[39] Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England: The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter* (London: Penguin Books, 2014).

[40] Philip J. Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry in the Age of the Hundred Years War* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019).

holds the rights to particular heraldic arms – Caudrey has deduced that the era of Edward III was one that was frequently hearkened back to by knights all over England, from the final decade of his reign and into the fifteenth century. It shows that the degree of English pride that was imprinted on the English mind was deep and lasting.

Each of these studies focuses on a theme pertinent to this thesis, whether it be national identity, political culture, or chivalry. The period of celebration and pride that arose during the 1340s and 1350s came as a result of the victories of the 1340s.[41] For the victories of the 1340s (and to a certain extent the 1330s) to transpire, it was essential that the English political elite be united, well-funded, and well-supplied. To receive appropriate support, Edward III saw that it was necessary to work with the commons and London merchants in the 1330s and early 1340s. For all this to come about, the dignity of the Crown had to be restored, and broken and damaged relationships with the magnates of England needed to be addressed. National unity and a common cause went hand-in-hand as Edward III helped launch England into a war for the French crown.

The significance of my argument is that current historiography fails to consider how and what connected the various social groups that made up the political community during the reign of Edward III. Without understanding the notion that national unity and common cause played a role in affecting the actions of the English political community during Edward III's reign, our understanding of the importance of the forging of English self-awareness is incomplete. The fact that the political community could celebrate and look back on the "golden years" of the 1340s and 1350s is a testament to the effectiveness of political harmony, chivalric culture, and national victory in contributing to the idea that national unity for a national purpose meant that the interests of the ruler and the rule combined to form a sense of common identity.[42]

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[41] The sorrowful reality of the Black Death played a major role in stifling what would have been an even more celebrative era. Edward III and Philippa lost a son (William of Windsor, d. 1348) and a daughter (Joan, d. 1348) to the plague.

[42] I must reiterate that this thesis is entirely focused on the state of the political community, and thus the vast majority of the actual population of England is excluded. The reign of Edward III was hit with famine and plague. The Black Death took its toll on English society. Perhaps the insistence of the superiority of England by contemporary and later chroniclers can be partially explained as an attempt to uphold triumphant moments at a time of real tragedy from the plague and economic losses suffered from periodic famines.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Edward II and Political Disunity, 1312-1330

In *Scalacronica*, the chronicler Thomas Gray writes that Edward II "reigned in great tribulation and adversity."[43] Edward II's reign was rife with unrest His inability to foster and preserve a healthy relationship with parliament and the wider nobility ultimately led to his downfall. The inability of Edward II and the barons to produce long-lasting and meaningful unity led to over two decades of political instability characterized by military defeats, civil war, and, and general domestic lawlessness. Understanding the political disunity between 1312 and 1327 gives a clearer picture of the 1330s, when the English political community began to recover from the unstable reign of Edward II and the corrupt management of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella.

At the beginning of Edward II's reign, it was clear that his attention and affection was drawn to the personage of Piers Gaveston far more than that of the nobility.[44] As the king's favorite, Gaveston was given large estates, a considerable amount of wealth, and a substantial role in the administration of the kingdom.[45] None of this was pleasing to the barons.

Thomas, the powerful earl of Lancaster, emerged as the leader of a baronial faction who grew increasingly incensed with Edward II's military inadequacy and favoritism to Gaveston. A breaking point was reached in 1312 when much of the nobility rallied around Thomas of Lancaster. To them, Edward II was corrupted by the counsel of Gaveston and was relinquishing his duty as king to protect and defend the laws and customs of the realm. The embittered barons captured and executed Gaveston in the summer of 1312, an act that moved

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[43] Gray, *Scalacronica,* 65. Thomas Gray was born to an English knight who had served under Edward I and Edward II. Gray served on a campaign with William Montagu. He began writing his chronicle in Anglo-Norman French while held captive in Edinburgh in the 1350s.
[44] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 71.
[45] Ibid. Edward I had exiled Gaveston because he saw how much of an impediment he was on his son. But when Edward II became king, he had Gaveston return to England, married him to his niece, and made him earl of Cornwall.

Edward II to seek revenge.[46] Instead of parlaying with the political community and gathering them together to mend relations, Edward raised his own army and marched against the forces of Lancaster.[47]

Two years after a treaty was struck between the Scots and the English, the English army, under the command of the king himself, was utterly humiliated at the battle of Bannockburn in 1314.[48] This defeat would instill an almost irrecoverable loss of confidence in the king's ability to rule effectively. In reaction, Thomas of Lancaster joined forces with the king in hopes of bringing victory against the Scots.[49] And once again, the king withdrew his army after failing to muster a military win in what had been a promising environment. To the barons, Edward's failures were not simply due to his own incompetence, but to his fascination with the Despenser family, who had replaced Gaveston as the king's favorites. In 1322, the English barons rallied around Thomas of Lancaster.[50] Together with his two brothers, the king marched his army and defeated Thomas of Lancaster's army at Boroughbridge. The earl of Hereford, a loyal ally to Lancaster, was slain. Lancaster, the king's own cousin, was captured and summarily executed at a state trial.[51]

For Edward II's reign, Scotland was the primary political focus, but that changed when Charles IV invaded the duchy of Aquitaine.[52] He claimed that the king of England had not fulfilled his feudal duty in paying homage from his capacity as duke of Aquitaine.

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[46] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum,* 17-18. Adam Murimuth was an English cleric who studied at Oxford and served time at the papal *curia* in Avignon before his retirement when he began to write his chronicle.

[47] Le Baker, *Chronicle*, 6. Around the same time a treaty was struck between the two forces, Edward of Windsor was born. Baker says that Edward of Windsor was to be known as the "great conqueror of the French, the terror of the Scots, and the one who by direct line of descent from the royal blood of England and France would inherit both kingdoms."

[48] Gray, *Scalacronica,* 75-79.

[49] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 29.

[50] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 91. The rebels also forced the Despenser family into exile. Thomas of Lancaster and his allies declared that if the king would not remove the Despensers from power, that they would see it as their duty to renounce their fealty and homage to the king, thus freeing themselves of their feudal obligations.

[51] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 36. After this victory, Edward II was still unable to mount a successful campaign the following year. The campaign ended with another truce.

[52] Scotland and France were longtime allies.

Therefore, the feudal oath was revoked.[53] The following year, the English royal council sent Queen Isabella to France to negotiate over the lands of Aquitaine and Ponthieu.[54] A deal was struck which entailed the young prince Edward of Windsor holding Aquitaine and the county of Ponthieu in feudal tenure as a vassal of the king of France.[55]

Edward II decided to remain in England when his son was sent to France to pay homage to Charles.[56] This was yet another example of Edward II's poor judgement and predilection to choose the Despensers over the good of the realm. Edward of Windsor paid homage for Aquitaine and Ponthieu, and between 1325 and 1327, remained under the protection of his mother Isabella in France.[57] Isabella ignored her husband's calls for her and Edward to return to England, and during this time, Roger Mortimer, the lord of Wigmore, had become the lover of the estranged queen.[58] Edward II's inability to challenge Isabella and her entourage spelled doom for his regime.

In 1326, Isabella struck an alliance with the Count of Hainaut which entailed the marriage between his daughter Philippa and her son Prince Edward.[59] Hainaut, a wealthy province in the Low Countries, not only became an ally to the future regime of Edward III but its proximity to England made it an effective base of operation for the coming rebellion. It was there that Isabella and Mortimer mustered an army to invade England. Their cause, they said, was to remove the corrupt Despensers who provided poor counsel to the king.[60]

When the rebels landed on English shores in 1326, they had already gained the support of the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford.[61] In the words of Geoffrey le Baker, Isabella and

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[53] Murimuth, 39-40, 42. Philip V had died in late 1322, and was succeeded by his brother, Charles IV. Charles invaded Aquitaine in 1324.

[54] Murimuth, 43. Isabella was the daughter of Philip IV of France, and sister to Charles IV.

[55] Murimuth, 43-44.

[56] Edward II had brought the Despensers back from exile after the battle of Boroughbridge.

[57] Murimuth, 44.

[58] Murimuth, 45. Mortimer had been among the nobles exiled by the king of England for fomenting rebellion and allying with Thomas of Lancaster.

[59] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 91.

[60] Gray, 93.

[61] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 46. It was essential for any monarch to garner Church support for any endeavor, and it was not uncommon in the fourteenth century for bishops to lead armies. Bishops, often through sermons, logically served as a trustworthy and validating mouthpiece for matters of royal and national concern. The archbishop of Canterbury, John Stratford, served as Edward III's chancellor and treasurer. William Wykeham, the bishop of Winchester, was a leading political actor in the latter years of

her forces were traitorous conspirators and allies of the devil.[62] As unpopular as Edward II was in England, Isabella was likely looked on with even more suspicion. Adam Orleton, the bishop of Hereford, referenced the book of 2 Kings as he rationalized the removal of Edward II as king: a "feeble head should be removed from a kingdom and not be protected by the support of flatterers."[63] The flatterers being the Despensers, the rebels saw themselves as liberators of a corrupt and weak regime.

Ultimately, the king and Hugh the Younger Despenser were captured near the Welsh Marches.[64] Hugh was brought before the bishop of Hereford and the queen, and like Thomas of Lancaster, summarily executed.[65] Edward II was sent to Kenilworth castle.[66] For the following weeks, the issue was what to do next because Edward II was still the rightful king of England.

Parliament was called at Westminster. As the prelates and barons discussed the matters of state with the Prince Edward of Windsor presiding, a crowd of Londoners found their way into Westminster Hall. They and the city authorities were curious as to what would arise out of the meeting whose decision would directly affect their lives.[67] It was decided that the king himself must be present or else there was not legitimate authority over the proceedings. However, when a delegation was sent to request that the king come to London, he refused.[68] Edward II wanted nothing to do with the actions of the political community.

Faced with an unprecedented situation, it was decided, with the backing of authorities of the City of London, that there would be a transfer of power from Edward II to Isabella and Edward of Windsor.[69] The fierce rhetoric from a number of the bishops incited a further call

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Edward's reign. Ecclesiastics were most effective at communicating matters of the realm to the people.

[62] Le Baker, *Chronicle*, 21. Baker likens Isabella to the biblical Jezebel, and the bishops who support her as priests of Baal. Baker uses Adam Murimuth and Sir Thomas da le More for the early years and then largely uses his own experiences starting in 1346.

[63] Le Baker, 22. Orleton also refers to the writings of Hippocrates concerning the head.

[64] In 1326, Hugh Despenser the Elder was killed at Bristol after the queen's forces had besieged it.

[65] Murimuth, 50.

[66] Mark Ormrod, *Edward III*, 46. The king was put under the protection of the earl of Leicester.

[67] Ormrod, 50.

[68] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 51.

[69] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 51.

for the first-ever deposition of an English king. Orleton, once more citing Scripture, proclaimed that "a foolish king shall ruin his people," to which he received the reply, "We do not wish him to reign over us any longer!"[70] Clearly, what began as a rebel insurgency had turned into a popular revolution led by the most powerful nobles of the land. By transferring the crown from father to mother and son, Parliament had exercised sovereignty over the mechanisms of English governance.

In January 1327, Edward II renounced his rights and duties as king.[71] The parliamentary proceedings are the subject of debate among historians who generally agree that the claim that Edward II was legally deposed is highly dubious. Nonetheless, Edward of Windsor was crowned king in 1327 at the age of fourteen. Even though England had a new king, Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer cast a large shadow over the new regime. It took three years for Edward III to initiate a coup of his own which led to the execution of the arrogant, ambitious, and corrupt Mortimer, and the house-arrest of his mother.[72] The 1310s and 1320s were politically unstable and full of strife. When Edward III began his majority rule in 1330, there were scores to set with the fractious nobility which had grown accustomed to civil war, military defeat, and kingly incompetence. For an English king to be an effective ruler in the early fourteenth century, he would have to realize that his role as feudal liege lord was becoming far less important during an era when the socio-political landscape was changing.

Feudalism

The fourteenth century was a time of considerable change in English government and society. Since the late thirteenth century, feudalism had begun to show signs of weakness because of its inherent inflexibility, an aspect that, since the late eleventh century, was its strength. Moreover, coming off the heels of the Commercial Revolution, English merchants

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[70] Ibid. The Scripture passage is cited from Ecclesiastes 10:16.
[71] Until his death, he was called Edward of Caernarvon. Caernarvon was the place of his birth.
[72] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 61-62.

were becoming more and more wealthy, thanks in large part to the wool trade. Ever since the mid-twelfth century, the English imported goods such as wine from the duchy of Aquitaine.[73]

Feudalism organically emerged as a way to bring order and stability, not only politically, but socially and economically. It had thrived in England since the eleventh century because it met the needs of a society ruled by a martial elite and driven by an agrarian economy. Feudalism was built off of mutual obligations made between lord (or suzerain) and vassal. Whether the lord was an earl, lesser baron, or a mere knight, it was in his interest to call on his vassals for military aid. And for the vassal, or tenant (often another knight), it was in his interest to be granted a piece of land by the lord (*fief*) and be involved in the web of military protection. Feudalism saw this need and satisfied it. But the pyramidic hierarchy of English feudalism, with the king as liege lord, and barons below him, began to take more of a horizontal framework. There were other players, including merchants, who held political power, but whose place was outside the structure of feudalism.

From the perspective of the king, feudalism was ripe for abuse. The king could exploit the military feudal aid on his vassals (for all English nobles were his vassals) and call them up for his wars. Or he could simply exploit "scutage" – shield money – in which a vassal paid his suzerain in lieu of granting military aid. This was an easy way for the king to accumulate funds that he may be abridged from collecting through taxation because, by the fourteenth century, direct taxation went under the oversight of Parliament. With wealth as a marker of status largely distinct from land tenure, there was also a shift in feudalism's inherent localism. Because government was essentially personal, it was essential for a vassal and lord to get along.

Even though custom took precedence over much of the developments of law in England, it could be quite stubborn to change. Because custom was not necessarily always inscribed, it was also inherently malleable. In the fourteenth century, we begin to see changes to the feudal structure because circumstances had necessitated its change.

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[73] The marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry Plantagenet in 1152 brought the duchy of Aquitaine under the suzerainty of the king of England. Even though the reigns of John and Henry III saw the loss of English-held territories in France, the king of England was, at the same time, the duke of Aquitaine. As duke, the English king was a vassal to the king of France.

"Bastard feudalism" was becoming common in the fourteenth-century England.[74] It denotes a feudal structure where relational bonds and purposes were changing. One of the changes was feudal oath based on the exchange of military aid for a grant of land. By the fourteenth century, the importance of land tenure was eclipsed and largely replaced by money contracts. A vassal would be paid for his services, and not necessarily given land to hold.[75] This shift was most relevant militarily. This "indentured relationship" of a contract thrived because it met *new* needs. The lord still required service, but political influence was of more importance. The vassal, now referred to as a "retainer," sought income and legal and political protection.[76]

It was far too rigid to rely on a system that required the observance of the feudal aids, such as attending the knighting of the lord's eldest son and attending the wedding of his eldest daughter. It was far too convenient to do away with all sorts of obligations and instead leave them to be attended to out of an act of political nicety. Throughout the fourteenth century, feudalism was to become more of a fiscal system than an honor-bound one.[77]

The traditional means of mustering troops in the form of feudal summons was being replaced by other forms of aid. Edward I was the last king to routinely call his barons using feudal summons, and Edward III, in 1377, was the last king to use scutage.[78] It was a time when military aid was no longer based on landed tenure, but, in Stenton's words, "allegiance."[79] Allegiance to what it is unclear: the lord, the king, money? As we shall see, Edward III appealed to allegiance to the transcendent principles of chivalry and national duty. While still relevant in many cases, local matters were sometimes eclipsed by national matters.

At first, this may appear to be a blow to royal control over local actions. It was indeed true that the system of social organization was no longer fundamentally bound by feudal bond of oath, honor, and blood. But the rigidities of feudalism that were being left behind cannot be

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[74] "Bastard Feudalism" was first coined by the Oxfordian historian Charles Plummer in the late nineteenth century to denote the contractual relationship between lords that was said to deal a blow to royal authority because the king was no longer solidly at the top of a the feudal hierarchy. Relationships were based more on money than feudal oath.

[75] Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), x.

[76] Strohm, 18.

[77] Strohm, 16.

[78] F. M. Stenton, "The Changing Feudalism of the Middle Ages," *History* (London) 19, no. 76 (1935), 294.

[79] Ibid.

understood as some sort of societal change, wherein, the lower rungs of the feudal hierarchy were challenging kingly authority. Rather, if the lords were seeking to circumvent the rigidities of feudalism, the king himself also found favor in following suit. Certain legal devices were gradually accepted in English society that were customarily judged to be exceptions before. Instead, they were becoming the rule. Entails, jointures, and enfeoffment-to-use all provided landholders with ways of getting around restrictions of their feudal tenure.[80]

Entail was when a noble would specify the line of succession for his family holdings as a way of circumventing a challenge of the land falling into the direct possession of the king.[81] In this view, the king, who would otherwise snatch a noble's estates if an heir was not found, would not have the opportunity to do so, that is, unless the noble chose to have the land revert back to the king. Ormrod refers to the example of John Hastings when he declared that a portion of the earldom of Pembroke be reverted to the king in the case of the Hastings line dying out. At the time, Edward III was still king, but when the Hastings line eventually died out in 1389, it fell into the hands of Richard II, who was not so popular with the nobility.[82]

Jointure, which became more popular in the mid-fourteenth century, was when a tenant-in-chief would pronounce that he and his spouse held the land jointly. In essence, it was not only the lord who held it but the lady as well. If the lord died (or on the occasion that the lady was the tenant-in-chief), the land that they held could not be seized by the king or his agents via wardship but instead was now held by the remaining spouse.[83]

Enfeoffment-to-use was a widespread practice that was gradually used as another way to secure an estate in case of a lord's death or on the occasion of a legal challenge with another estate that he may not rule directly. In this case, a lord appointed what amounted to trustees or stewards who would take charge of the estate in the family's stead.

These practices would seem to deprive the king of his feudal rights of escheat: the reversion of an estate when it had no successor. It would also seem to undermine king's feudal rights of wardship, in which the estate would be ruled by the king in the case of a minority lord. But Ormrod argues that, during the reign of Edward III, entail, jointure, and

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[80] Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* 138.
[81] Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III*, 114-5.
[82] Ormrod, 115.
[83] Ormrod, 113.

enfeoffment-to-use were not practiced by a hostile nobility that sought to strip the king of his authority. Instead, they were used to deprive fellow nobles of taking advantage of their own estates, especially when they were away at war.[84] This is an example of a "horizontal dispersal of loyalties," in which members of a certain social group were becoming more aware of their place in a particular faction than directing themselves solely upward towards a single lord.[85] The changing state of feudalism meant that the nobility was more incline to compete against each other rather than unite against the king. It was in the king and the nobles' interest to work together.

London and the Economy

The Commercial Revolution had developed throughout the twelfth, thirteenth, and into the fourteenth century.[86] It was based on the widespread trade across Europe of a variety of goods that had either originated in Europe, or had been traded from the lands to the east, whether that be the Islamic caliphates or the Byzantine Empire. If they had accomplished nothing else, the Crusades in the Levant had opened up new trading routes in which a merchant in York could serve oranges at his supper table. This is not to say that no trade existed before this time, but that it became far more bountiful and lucrative. For England, development of the merchant trade naturally led to the merchant classes accumulating amounts of wealth that would rival or even surpass that of the landed nobility. Even though they possessed no titles, London merchants were significant players in English society. London was the economic capital of England by the mid-fourteenth century, while also becoming more firmly the political and administrative center as well. In size and influence, it was comparable to any other of the great cities of Europe.[87]

That the merchants of London tended to be more cosmopolitan than other English social groups is a testament to its status as a center for trade. Some medievalists, such as

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[84] Ormrod, 116.

[85] Strohm, *Social Chaucer,* 21.

[86] For an in-depth study on the Commercial Revolution, see Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350.* Economic Civilizations of Europe (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[87] McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 379.

McFarlane, apply the word "proto-capitalist" to the type of economy in England during the fourteenth century. While I hesitate to apply a term that has more modern connotations, the economy was certainly of a type that can be defined as "merchant capitalist," insofar as the simple movement of goods between markets in England and markets on the Continent was far more advanced than it had ever been before.[88]

It was essential for English victory in France and elsewhere for England's wool trade to be efficient and lucrative. Into the 1330s, independent merchants had been the primary movers of wool from England to the Continent (primarily Flanders). Parliament began to seize more influence over how the wool was traded, and instead of a private trade, the wool trade would be harnessed by the royal government to help fund policies pertaining to the royal and national interest The ability to appeal to the merchants of London would be helpful to Edward III's aims. While the merchants seem to have had their own distinct culture, as I will note in more depth in the third chapter, by the end of Edward III's reign, the lines between landed gentry and urban merchants were beginning to blur.

Parliament

Parliament had always been primarily a loose assembly of lords of the realm who had met to air their grievances against the king. As Lyon notes, "the significance of [Edward III's] long reign lies in the remarkable progress made by parliament."[89] Indeed, it was during Edward III's reign that it had split into an upper and lower chamber: the House of Lords and the House of Commons. And further yet, the tenurial baronage that was originally created by William I had gradually lost the rights of local jurisdiction. They were being replaced by a

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[88] I have found that the scholars who tend to apply the term "capitalist" to the economy of England in the fourteenth century tend to be those of the early twentieth century, such as Michael Postan and K. B. McFarlane. "Merchant capitalist" and "proto-capitalist" seem to be largely synonymous with a system in which goods are being moved by merchants at a rapid rate, but where the amount of industrialization, or more pointedly, the development of a native form of the production of such goods, is not apparent. It is based on trade of merchants, not the mass production of the Industrial Age.

[89] Bryce Lyon, *A Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England* (New York: Harper, 1960), 487.

newer body of landed gentry and barons who were being chosen as "peers" to sit in the House of Lords in the national parliament.[90]

In the early fourteenth century, parliament had ceased to be a place to air grievances. It became an active force in financial policy. Sayles says that the shift between the reign of Edward I and Edward III is fundamental to understanding the evolution of Parliament because during the reign of Edward I, legislation worked down from the king and his ministers. But during the reign of Edward III, legislation began to derive from the pleas of the commons.[91] I will explore this in more depth in the next chapter, but the increasing influence of Parliament was a positive development for Edward III and royal power, not a negative one. The king's ability to tax, legislate, and administer arbitrarily was restricted, but the "real distribution of power," as Ormrod puts it, was minimal.[92] The remarkable aspect of parliament was the growing number of knights and burgesses who had been included during Edward III's reign.[93] Clearly, knights, burgesses, and the merchants were important enough to be considered significant for decisions that concerned the entire realm.

By giving an overview of the political history of Edward II's reign, we have seen the lack of social cohesion between the Crown and the nobility and the consequences resulting from baronial revolt and military failure. Edward III inherited a kingdom whose nobility was fractious and whose queen had just led a rebellion against her own husband. The relationship between the Crown and nobility, as well as among the Plantagenet family members, was frayed. The development of "bastard feudalism" started under Edward I but had become more normalized during Edward III's reign. In place of the feudal vassal, a knight may become a lord's retainer, in which he was retained to fight for the lord based on wages. The old feudal structure was falling apart because it was becoming economically obsolete. The more effective means in raising an army was by paying them instead of using the feudal right of

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[90] D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325-1520* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 97.
[91] G. O Sayles, *The King's Parliament of England* (New York: Norton, 1974), 115. Sayles goes on to say that it was not in the interest of the king and his ministers to subvert the power of Parliament, and into the fifteenth century, their importance increased, and their actions became more unified and coherent (120).
[92] Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III,* 202.
[93] Burgesses were privileged townsmen who were often somewhat wealthy and elected at the local level of government. A small number of them would be summoned to parliament.

summons. It proved to be far more effective than the unruly individualism of the feudal summons.[94] This was attested in Edward III's first and last use of the feudal summons in 1327.[95]

By Edward III's accession, English society was changing politically, socially, and economically. London merchants were beginning to be the economic equals of some of the lesser nobility, even if they were still of a different social status. With the emergence of parliament as a national meeting called by the king, the political community was able to be involved far more than ever before in the dealings of the royal government. Creating a bond among the various social groups that made up community of the realm would prove to be a boon for the ambitions of the Edwardian regime. The early fourteenth century was an era of political disunity. The barons fought amongst each other and against the king. There was not a clear justification for the political community to harmonize or identify with a common cause. The dignity of the Crown had been stained with the incompetent leadership of Edward II, and the failure of the martial elite to achieve decisive victories against the Scots did nothing to stoke chivalric companionship. By 1330, the political community was fractious and largely without direction except their own individual self-interest.

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[94] McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century,* 236.
[95] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 65. Edward employed the traditional feudal service by calling his tenants-in-chief as he crossed the Tweed and besieged Norham castle in 1327.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL HARMONY

The issues that plagued England for over two decades were very much present in the mind of the political community at Westminster Abbey on 1 February 1327 as Edward of Windsor was crowned king while his father sat in a prison in Kenilworth castle.[96] For Edward III to be perceived as a strong and forceful king, he would need to first assuage the skepticism of the barons. Reconciliation between and among the barons and the Crown and the institution of a generous policy of royal patronage, coupled with greater cooperation between the Crown and the commons helped forge a general harmony among the English political community. Achieving political harmony was fundamental in the process of national unity. The awareness of a common objective became most evident by England's military engagements with Scotland – but more profoundly – with France.[97]

Reconciliation and Royal Patronage

Edward II alienated members of the higher nobility by his avoidance of war and his contempt for chivalric activities.[98] The rift between the Crown and the higher nobility derived from Edward II's dependence on his court favorites. He systematically sought to deprive them of political opportunities by bestowing extravagant riches on Gaveston and the Despensers. When Edward III instigated the Nottingham coup in October 1330 and overthrew the corrupt and unpopular government of Roger Mortimer and Isabella, it was incumbent upon him to not make the same mistakes as his father. Edward II's reign was not only a disaster, but an

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[96] Ormrod, 55.

[97] The primary sources that will be used are drawn primarily from chroniclers and the *Calendar of Close Rolls* and the *Calendar of Patent Rolls*. A complete record of *Patent Rolls* during Edward III's reign can be found online (*Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, Hathitrust Digital Library (University of Michigan: Great Britain, 1891). There is limited access to *Close Rolls* during Edward III's reign (*Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office,* Hathitrust Digital Library (University of Michigan: London, 1892-1963).

[98] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown*, 96. For more detail on Edward II's dislike for chivalric activities, see chapter 4.

embarrassment to what the English monarchy ought to personify.[99] The generous policy of royal patronage demonstrated that Edward III was not beholden to visit the sins of the father upon the son, and that he understood that to effect an enduring, popular rule, it was necessary to establish domestic stability. Edward II ruled in opposition to his nobility far more than in communion with them.[100] Because a chord of harmony was struck among Edward III, the higher nobility, the commons, and popular support achieved for lofty ambitions throughout his reign – 1330-1377 – at no time did an English baron raise their sword in rebellion against the king. The previous custom of all four previous kings was broken. All had faced an armed, baronial revolt: 1215, 1258, 1297, and 1311.[101]

The higher nobility was composed of the sixty to seventy nobles who formed the peerage.[102] These were the earls and a number of barons. What set apart these nobles from others was that they tended to be decorated military commanders, effective advisors of the king, and held lordship over the largest estates.[103] They enjoyed "leadership and influence,"

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[99] Boulton, 97.

[100] The medieval understanding of the supposed "church vs state" is often misunderstood largely because the modern notion of the "state" did not exist until the late Middle Ages. Ecclesiastical and secular powers were meant to rule together. Secular lords were to punish the wrongdoer and provide societal order and stability so that the Church may nurture the soul and direct all members of society towards the Divine.

[101] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 246. During Edward III's minority reign in 1328, there had been an uprising by politically disaffected barons of the regime led by Roger Mortimer and Isabella. I do not constitute this rebellion as an uprising against the kingship of Edward III because Mortimer was the premier political power at the time. As I will touch on in the third section of this chapter, Edward III came the closest to facing armed rebellion in 1341, during a crisis that was based on the king's harassment of the archbishop of Canterbury, John Stratford, who Edward blamed for not sending enough resources to maintain his army.

[102] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility*, 1. Given-Wilson estimates that the number of barons entitled to parliament was around sixty or seventy. While the lords spiritual – the archbishops, bishops, and abbots – would typically be counted among this number due to their position as barons, throughout most of Edward III's reign, the prelates did not attend parliament and kept their focus on ecclesiastical matters. While Edward III's relationship with the English church and the papacy is beyond the scope of this thesis, he did enjoy a generally peaceful relationship with both. There was a strain of skepticism forming in the English nobility with relation to papal interference. While Edward III did not outright challenge papal authority, like other English kings, he was orthodox in his thinking but liked for the English church to possess a degree of independence from papal affairs. This position is likely due to the fact that the popes at this time were French, and the papacy was based at Avignon.

[103] Given-Wilson, 1.

not "control."[104] Given-Wilson describes the fourteenth-century noble as one whose status was constantly in flux. Because the most powerful nobles ruled over other nobles, they, in a sense, were ruling their own respective "countries."[105]

Since relations between the king and the titular nobility were such a critical factor in politics, it was beneficial for them to work together in pursuit of one another's interests. At the inception of Edward's reign, there was a shortage of earls. Between 1322 and 1330, seven earls had died in the civil wars: Lancaster, Hereford, Carlisle, Arundel, Winchester, Kent, and March.[106] Additionally, among the remaining eight earls, half of them were aging, leaving only four earls who were of relatively young age.[107] Edward's first move was to repair relations with those disaffected by the 1320s. There were three major political factions: the nobility who had sided with Thomas of Lancaster; those who had remained loyal to Edward II, and those who had joined the forces of Isabella and Mortimer. Even though Mortimer was an unpopular figure, his family was loyal to him – and he to them.

In a demonstration of reconciliation, Edward III restored the inheritance to the heir of the earldom of Arundel, whose father was executed for treason on the orders of Isabella and Mortimer.[108] The magnates who participated in the unsuccessful coup against Mortimer's government in 1328-29, including Henry of Lancaster and the earl of Norfolk, were forgiven.[109] Hugh and Edward, two sons of the Hugh Despenser the Younger who had been executed by Isabella and Mortimer, were gradually brought into the inner-circle of Edward III's court over the 1330s. And perhaps most surprisingly, the heirs to Roger Mortimer, the man whom Edward III had overthrown and executed, were slowly gathered into the king's good graces.[110] These actions were either made or instigated in 1330 – all of which would prove to be beneficial to Edward's reign.

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Given-Wilson, 34.

[107] Only the earls of Warwick, Arundel, and Oxford were about the same age as the new king. Warwick and Arundel became two of the closest friends to Edward III, and they lasted throughout all of his major campaigns. Warwick died in 1369; Arundel in 1376.

[108] James Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage,* 5.

[109] Ibid., 6.

[110] Ibid.

While these actions may seem to be magnanimous, they risked being overly generous to nobles who were at each other's throats only a few years prior, and who had rebelled against an English king. Edward III seemed to believe that reconciliation and moderation were keys to good kingship. While these actions, as Bothwell says, "[risked] a return to old power struggles," Edward III's approach differed from his predecessors because he did not appear to be selective with his patronage and endowments.[111] He did not view this sort of reconciliation as "buying off" the nobility, but as a way of forming a bond with them that conveyed the idea that the nobles received their position at the bequest of the king. In much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship on Edward III, he is criticized for giving in to the grievances of the lords and commons. What Ormrod and others have argued in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, is that whenever Edward III satisfied the interests of the political community he was doing so from a position of royal authority.

On the eve of the first English invasion of France in March 1337, Edward III created six new earls.[112] These new earls were the lords Salisbury, Huntingdon, Suffolk, Northampton, Derby, and Gloucester. What is remarkable about this act is not only who Edward III chose and when but *why* he chose to create these new earldoms in the first place. If his policy between 1330 and 1337 was to reconcile his relations with the old titular nobility and the disaffected earls of the 1320s, 1337 was an altogether novel approach that stemmed from Edward III's ability to marry chivalric idealism with pragmatic policy. If he were going to be successful in reclaiming the throne of France from the "tyrant" Charles VI, he required all the help he could muster from the English nobility.

Edward III seems to have understood that it was not the sheer amount of men which made an army successful but the motivations and attitude that they had as they charged into battle. McFarlane describes it as Edward's perceived vision of himself as "chivalrous master" and belief in the chivalric virtue of *largesse*.[113] By rewarding those who helped him in the past, Edward III demonstrated his style of kingship as a two-way street. Salisbury, Northampton, Huntingdon, and Suffolk all took part in the Nottingham coup of 1330, and had

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[111] Ibid.

[112] K. B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England,* 158-9. They were created at the Parliament on 16 March 1337.

[113] McFarlane, 160.

become close personal friends of Edward III and great purveyors of chivalry.[114] The earl of Derby was Edward's second cousin, Henry of Grosmont, whose own father was Henry, earl of Lancaster.[115] From one point of view, this act may be seen as a repeat of Edward II bestowing gifts on his favorites. But Gaveston and the two Despensers abused their power and status, while those Edward III chose remained true to him through thick and thin. Given-Wilson describes these new earls as a "solid group of great men firmly committed to the king and each other" who supported the harmonious atmosphere of domestic politics during the crucial years of Edward III's reign.[116]

By creating earldoms, he not only bound their status to himself, but their well-being to his crown. What better way to ignite a sense of pride and confidence within the political elite on the eve of invading France than to promote several nobles, thereby showing that those who curried favor with this king were promptly rewarded? Edward II rewarded only a select few at the disparagement of the whole.

The policy of Edward III's regime risked granting great prestige and authority to a nobility that had historically been rather hostile to the Crown. Domestic strife was commonplace for over a hundred years. Civil war erupted between the barons and the Crown during the reigns of John, Henry III, and Edward II. Edward I sought to limit the power of the nobility where he could, and conceived of a much more authoritative style of kingship.[117] If the barons were obstacles to the monarchy for previous kings, why promote them?

The "new nobility" was intended as a means to an end: the fulfillment of Edward III's personal ambitions and political community's interests. Chief among these was the conquest of France, and to a lesser but yet important extent, suppressing the Scots. This is why the timing of the creation of the six earldoms in 1337 is important. They were not created at a time of peace, but at a time when it was imperative for the political elite to be directed towards a common cause.

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[114] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* 35.
[115] Henry succeeded his father as earl of Lancaster in 1345.
[116] Given-Wilson, 36-7. Given-Wilson names Montagu, Bohun, and Grosmont (earls of Salisbury, Northampton, and Derby respectively) as those who help make up the "good men" around the king.
[117] McFarlane, 156.

It is important to provide further perspective of the scale of the policy of royal patronage as a means of forging a bond with the nobility. Before 1337, the only title that was heritable in England – apart from the king – was the earl.[118] At the end of William I's reign, there were nine earls, each of Norman descent. As the Angevin Empire dissolved during the incompetent reigns of John and Henry III, the earls had ceased to be exclusively of Norman descent. It was an unintended consequence of England losing her French territories in the early thirteenth century that led to a more developed *English* nobility, even though it would take until 1362 for English to be declared as the proper language for legal proceedings in Parliament.[119] Given-Wilson notes that the English elite's exclusivity and general cosmopolitan sentiments are why the anglicization (linguistically and culturally) was a longer process than it otherwise may have been in the fourteenth century.[120] The Hundred Years War and the drought of stable English influence on the Continent meant a greater awareness of national sentiment in the baronial courts.[121] English barons were living in England and fighting foreign powers, not enjoying hegemony on the Continent that would allow for greater fascination with non-English cultural tastes. This growing conception within the character of the English nobility was conducive to creating a sense of national purpose for war in France that extended beyond chivalric adventure and instead out of a desire to display the superiority of English arms.

At the time of Edward I, there were eleven earls. Edward III created eleven of his own and adopted the French title of "duke" to his *most* favored nobles. If his policy of promotion among the nobility was meant as a way for them to feel more prestigious on the national stage it was also to make the entire English nobility appear more reputable on the European stage. The title of duke was introduced in 1337 and bestowed upon the king's son.[122] As the duke of Cornwall, it was clear that while the title of earl was reserved for close companions of the king, the title of duke was created for the king's family.[123] Similar to the Burgundian dukes

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[118] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* 29.
[119] Given-Wilson, 9.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe, 1270-1380* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 200), 298.
[122] Edward of Woodstock was made earl of Chester in 1333.
[123] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* 45.

and their dynastic associations with the French monarchy, in several years, Edward III could employ English dukes as vessels for furthering the Plantagenet dynasty.

Dukes and earls were always counted among the peerage and granted parliamentary summons by right of their status. They were also given pensions by the royal treasury that reflected their rank.[124] The higher peers – the dukes and earls – stood above the generic "barons," of which there numbered around several hundred in the fourteenth century.[125] Over the course of Edward's reign, the duke was increasingly moored to the monarch. In 1351, Henry of Grosmont was made the first duke of Lancaster.[126] Edward III's sons Lionel and John were made dukes in 1362.[127] The younger Edmund of Langley was made the first duke of York after Edward III's death in 1385.

Edward III's policy also extended to what Given-Wilson calls the "marriage market." Not only was marriage a way for nobles to secure the status of their sisters and daughters but to multiply the dynastic bloodline. Interestingly enough, of the thirteen earls and dukes in 1362, "only three were primogenitary descendants of men who had held the same titles in Edward II's reign."[128] In other words, there was a great turnover within the English nobility throughout the decades of Edward III's reign which first proved to be an advantageous circumstance for creating new alliances. Later, however, it meant that the nobles would not be of his generation and would have far more in common with a new generation. Every other earl and duke in 1362 were new men: their titular position was created by the king or they had married the daughter, thus changing the family name.[129]

It is with this in mind that I wish to convey the point that while the policy of royal patronage was effective in promoting a cooperative relationship with the nobility, this was not something that would last even into the final years of Edward III's reign. The degree to which a bond was forged between the Crown and the higher nobility was fundamental to the success

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[124] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 99.

[125] Ibid. While there were several hundred barons (lords), fewer than a hundred would be considered influential enough to be summoned to parliament. Edward III typically summoned no more than sixty barons to a particular parliament.

[126] Henry was Edward's second cousin.

[127] Since John of Gaunt married the daughter of Henry of Grosmont, Blanche, he inherited the duchy of Lancaster. Lionel was made duke of Clarence.

[128] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* 45.

[129] Ibid.

that would come out of the 1340s and 1350s. The friends that Edward made, for example, the earls of Salisbury, Arundel, Northampton, and Lancaster, would not only demonstrate their fidelity to the national cause of England in war, but in the cultivation of tournament life and holding positions in the administration, offering counsel, and working with diplomacy.[130]

Bothwell admittedly takes a more cynical view of the policy of royal patronage as a policy of self-preservation. Since royal authority was frequently ignored in the thirteenth century, and the influence of Parliament had only increased by the time of Edward III's coronation, Edward III may have believed that he needed to please the nobility by granting them titles and pensions. Bothwell argues that Edward III's approach was manipulative *and* innovative because it served as a subtle way to restore royal authority.[131] No doubt that Edward III certainly had in mind the idea that he needed to restore dignity to a crown that had been left disheveled by his father. By avoiding the cynical approach of his Edward I, he also understood the *zeitgeist* of his time and capitalized on the nobility's desire for chivalric rituals, warfare, and lordly prestige. By expanding the pool of the titled nobility, there was simultaneously a novel sense of status among those who were chosen, but what is also evident is the purpose for which they were chosen in the first place. It is apparent in the date of 1337, on the eve of the Hundred Years War, that the hope of granting higher status could further a spirit of confidence and energy that would forge a stable support-group for the wars in France.

Cooperation with the Commons: Country Gentry and London Merchants

English knights and burgesses wanted a king who respected the traditions and customs of England as they understood them. Because of his affinity for chivalry and his longing to reignite England's lost glory, Edward III ruled rather conservatively.[132] Of course, this is not to say that he and the greater political community resisted change as much as they wished things to remain as they were – insofar as it benefited themselves. No one wanted to continue the *status quo* set by Edward II's reign, but if things were going well, they had no justification for things to change. The relationship between the Crown and the higher nobility was the

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[130] McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England,* 160.
[131] Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage,* 160.
[132] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 101.

deepest and most fruitful of the relationships forged and fostered during the reign of Edward III, even though it would begin to fray in the 1360s and face trials and tribulations in the 1370s. To a lesser degree, but still fundamental to the emergence of political harmony was the Crown's increasing cooperation with the commons.

The highest level of the lower nobility was the "gentry," composed of around a thousand knight bannerets during Edward III's time.[133] These were the wealthiest knights and roughly ten percent of them would be called to Parliament. Below these knights were the knights bachelor, a sort of retainer who often did not hold his own land and was instead a part of a king or baron's household.[134] Unlike the bannerets, who were able to display their own personal arms, knights bachelor were expected to wear the arms of their lord.

From a modern perspective it is easy to slip into a mindset that states the lower "classes" only respected the authority of the king and nobility out of self-preservation and fear, but the fact of the matter was that the knights and barons were of a far more traditional demeanor than the more cosmopolitan earls. The barons had risen up against King John in 1215 because they believed he was infringing on their rights and customs, not because they had a revolutionary outlook on a government ruled by the baronage.[135] The commons "wanted a king who would respect them and their traditional rights and values."[136] It was also important to them that they be asked to advise on matters concerning the realm. They desired a king in the mold of Edward I or Richard I than Henry III and Edward II. They wanted to be triumphant in war, not merely for loot and plunder, but for personal glory and prestige. Their demands were satisfied with the reign of Edward III.[137]

The contemporary literary culture of the early fourteenth century began to instill a deeper identification with the English *locus* for heroic deeds rather than far-off exotic lands. The Middle English romances such as *Bevis of Hampton* and *Guy of Warwick* are set in England, bear a martial outlook, and are written in English. They told of prowess and virtue about as much as the Arthurian tales that were popular with the upper nobility. However,

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[133] Boulton, 100. Ormrod and Boulton apply the term "gentry" for those that made up the lower nobility. The gentry is a more non-martial term for the knightly class.
[134] Ibid.
[135] The modern connotation of "right" is not synonymous with the medieval notion of "rights." Medieval "rights" are more akin to "privileges."
[136] Boulton, 101.
[137] Ibid.

given the setting and language, Bradbury argues that they were intended to grab the attention of the commons.[138] Because the gentry was becoming more literate in their native English, chivalric literature could serve as a crossover of interest with the nobility.

The lower nobility had become only more politically active by the time of Edward III and would continue to do so as the century carried on.[139] Parliament was often a forum for airing grievances but not necessarily a place for crafting policy. That changed during Edward III's reign because Parliament began to assert itself as an "independent political voice" in the mid-1320s.[140] That Parliament began to conduct its business with respect to the "common profit of the king and the kingdom," as Ormrod notes, became clear during the reign of Edward III through a politics of consensus.[141]

While the behavior of the Crown was rather conservative, its policies were generally in line with the *zeitgeist* of the changing times. The only time Edward III called the feudal host to perform its obligatory forty days of unpaid service was the first year of his reign.[142] For most of the 1330s, the Crown's relationship with the lower levels of the English political community were chiefly financial. One might suspect that Edward III would be the type of king to use the emergency of war as an excuse for disregarding the input of the commons, thereby ignoring the politics of consensus. But Ormrod argues that Edward III "showed no inclination" for such behavior.[143] He and his ministers customarily and actively sought to engage with the commons in Parliament.

It was within these types of negotiations when funds were secured from the wool subsidy. When Flemish weavers were brought to England as a consequence of Edward III's policy, Woods says that this was a conscious effort to create a well of independent financial support.[144] Early on, Edward III's regime borrowed from Italian bankers, but I would argue

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[138] Nancy M. Bradbury, *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in Late Medieval England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 24.

[139] Philip J. Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry,* 150.

[140] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 596. The make-shift Parliament of 1327 that supposedly legally deposed Edward II was a striking example of the self-determination and self-importance of the political community. However, Parliament was only ever able to properly meet if it was called by the king. It could not call itself into session.

[141] Ormrod, 597.

[142] Ormrod, 155.

[143] Ormrod, 597.

[144] William Woods, *England in the Age of Chaucer* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976), 202.

that the ability to alternatively and ultimately borrow from London merchants, meant that a financial bond was formed between the royal administration and the economic establishment.

Edward I expelled the Jewish population from England in 1290. This act of xenophobia was meant as an attempt to purify the English banking and markets from "corrupt" Jews. With English Jews largely gone from England by the mid-fourteenth century, there was a vacuum for the field of investment. Swanton argues that the English merchants filled the gap left by the Jews, and that "commercially successful" burgesses began to explore a life of holding estates akin to the landed gentry.[145] No doubt, the merchants who had indirect knowledge of the culture of the nobility began to take interest in the gentry culture of the English lay nobility.

For example, William de la Pole was a burgess who replaced the Italian bankers as the leading creditor of Edward III by the 1340s. Because of the wealth that he had accrued over his lifetime, his son became the earl of Suffolk in 1370.[146] This is another example of the increasing capacity of money and wealth becoming as important as noble birth in the formation of one's social and political status. Two London merchants, Andrew Aubrey and John Pountney, grew wealthy because of the lucrative textile trade from Flanders. More than anywhere else in England, merchants possessed the most political power in London.

The horizontal relationships among the political community are further apparent with the example of John Montagu, 3rd earl of Salisbury. He became the first earl to marry a merchant's daughter.[147] Her father had been the Mayor of London in 1352-4, and her marriage to Montagu had been her second. Her first had been to a Londoner.[148] Edward III's use of the wool trade consisted of a crossover of political and economic consequences between the Crown and higher nobility and the merchant classes. Because of the importance of the wool trade to his military exploits, the market of wool was a lucrative one which caused many of those who would be considered to form the base of the political community to

[145] Michael Swanton, *English Literature before Chaucer* (London; New York: Longman, 1987), 289.
[146] Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 126.
[147] The merchant daughter's name is unknown.
[148] McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England,* 166.

financial prosperity. They did this to such an extent that they began to purchase manors and indulge themselves in knightly culture.[149]

The idea of the "community of the realm," a gathering of significant or "important" persons of the realm had become increasingly institutionalized in the reign of Edward III. As Ruddick notes, the "community of the realm" first denoted members of the court and baronage, but over the course of the thirteenth century, came to include the country gentry and urban patriciate.[150] This is evident not only in the real political influence but in the rhetoric of certain government documents. An increasing usage of the phrase "defense of the kingdom" is something that Ruddick explores.[151] An increasing idea of a "common good" assumes that there is a sense of what is held in common in the realm. Gone was the rhetoric that exclusively referred to the justification of war solely as a pursuit of the king's rights.

The growing political power from economic wealth is witnessed in the various dealings that Edward III's regime had with the London merchants. 1341 was a tipping point in many respects. Ormrod pronounces that it is the year that Edward III "became a man" because of his ability to put aside the pettiness of a monarch grasping for money and to remain constant with a policy of cooperative politics.[152] Londoner influence can be felt in a scene that Edward III's contemporary, Geoffrey le Baker, describes. When the Londoners refused to allow justices to hold court in the city, citing a violation of their liberties, they rioted. Edward III is surprised at first, likely because he assumes that the rioters were commoners, and not burgesses. Baker says that when he finds out that it is the "middle-class citizens" who were rioting to protect their rights, he makes sure to calm them down and forgive them for their rioting.[153] Then, in a show of restraint and devotion to respecting the rights of the political community, he orders the justices to leave the city and take up residence elsewhere.[154]

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[149] McFarlane, 167. McFarlane notes that "citizens and townsmen had prospered since the twelfth century and invested their profits in land," but the money that they were able to make off of the wool trade because of the funds required for the Hundred Years War campaigns, had produced wealth of an unforeseen scale.

[150] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture,* 187.

[151] For analysis of the rhetoric of "defense of the kingdom" and other national rhetoric, see chapter 5.

[152] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 240.

[153] David Preest applies the term "middle-class citizens" in his recent translation of Baker's *Chronicle.*

[154] Le Baker, *Chronicle,* 64.

Edward III and his ministers understood that they needed the merchant classes and the support of the country gentry if he were to wield victory in France. But he also seems to have believed that doing so would simply be a common good and a testament to proper kingship. Between 1344 and 1355, Edward was able to win the support of the commons to secure direct lay taxation. From 1342 onward, they also repeatedly reaffirmed wool subsidy.[155]

The evolution of Parliament as a national forum led to a politically active gentry during Edward III's reign.[156] Since Edward's armies were made up of mostly men-at-arms rather than knights, more gentry were enlisted from their rural, country settings to participate in the cause of war in France. It is a misconception that many of those who made up the English army who were non-knights were mere commoners. McFarlane notes that the men-at-arms were not "low-born." Many of them were younger sons of the lesser gentry, often from near the Welsh border.[157] These soldiers had lost the opportunity to hold the lands of their fathers, but they could find themselves involved in a national purpose to defend the realm. Many of the captains in Edward's army were landless, but there was a growing notion among the English political community that stressed that these types of soldiers were not fighting solely for the king. Instead, they were fighting as "servants of the nation and the common good."[158]

Another example of the increased connection between the commons and the Crown is Edward III's choice of a secular baron for chancellor in 1340. It was always customary for positions in government to be staffed by nobles paired with a literate clerk. Bishops were frequently chosen because they were among the most literate. The selection of a member of the gentry proved that they were much more likely to be literate at this time. This precedent was repeated again, as Edward III "frequently employed his barons in diplomatic and other business."[159] Literacy was proving to be a path to political power, a trend that was already affecting those who held great power already, including Henry of Grosmont, and Edward III himself, who may have written a poem for the instruction of his eldest son, revealing an

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[155] Mark Ormrod, "Edward III and the Recovery of Royal Authority in England, 1340-60" *History (London)* 72, no. 234 (1987), 10.
[156] Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry*, 150.
[157] McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England,* 162.
[158] Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame,* 134.
[159] McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England*, 45.

interest in poetry and the ability to write. It was more advantageous for the Crown to choose laymen for positions in government because they did not have to have the precedent of Becket in mind as they carried out their governmental duties.[160]

In conclusion, the growing influence of the commons during the reign of Edward III was a consequence of an evolution that had begun during the reigns of Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II. That the country gentry and merchants played an unprecedented role in national politics is demonstrable by the growth of Parliament as a national forum, the recruitment of the soldiery from across the English countryside, and the increasing economic power of London citizens and merchants. The fact that these three conditions influenced the behavior of the Crown shows that the notion of the "community of the realm" was more fundamental to proper kingship and English prosperity than it had ever been before in England.

Unity Tested: War in Scotland and France

The unpopular Treaty of Northampton struck with Scotland in 1328 had annoyed most English nobles. Following Robert the Bruce's death in 1329, the Scottish throne went to David II, a sickly five-year-old.[161] With this development, the English saw an opportunity. Edward Balliol, a Scottish noble, was put forward by the English as the alternative to David II. But the Scots were less than thrilled with the idea that Edward Balliol's kingship would translate to Scotland becoming a feudal vassal of the king of England.[162] Edward III appears to have learned from the shortcomings of his grandfather and the repercussions of the Treaty of Northampton because he did not press full sovereignty upon Scotland. He recognized that the treaty expressed a solid alliance between France and Scotland and perhaps by asserting control of Scotland, he might release Philip VI of France to assert *his* sovereignty over the English holding of Aquitaine.[163]

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[160] It is often said that John Stratford, the archbishop of Canterbury who served as chancellor and treasurer for Edward III, often wished to view himself as another Thomas Becket. During the parliamentary crisis of 1341, when Edward III accused Stratford of incompetence, Stratford began to think that it may be his time to be martyred.

[161] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 148.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

Scotland was a theater of defeat for Edward II. His unsuccessful attacks on the Scots added to the discontent among the nobility, especially the northern magnates who either lost lands by Scottish forces or from the Treaty of Northampton. Considering Scotland's close relationship with France, it could not be dealt with without assessing how France would react. But even so, Scotland presented the readiest opportunity for Edward III to demonstrate his martial capabilities for all of the English magnates to see.

In 1332, Edward Balliol, the pretender to the throne of Scotland, invaded his own homeland with the backing of English forces and won a victory at Dupplin Moor.[164] Later, Edward III led the English to Scotland and crushed the Scots at Halidon Hill, scoring his first major military triumph.[165]

It was a long time coming for the passionate devotee to chivalry that Edward III was. During the guardianship of Mortimer and Isabella, Edward accompanied a force to Scotland in 1327, but with regards to the battle against the Scottish leader known as Black Douglas, Thomas Gray says that Edward wept because he was "innocent" in the fighting, meaning he did not bloody his sword.[166] Clearly, he thought that he was required to display his prowess to his fellow comrades-in-arms.

For the following few years, the English capitalized on their victory at Halidon Hill by driving deeper into Scotland and employing a tactic that would be a marker of the campaigns in France in the 1340s. The Scottish campaign earned Edward III a positive rapport with the nobility. He set out to accomplish what his father could not: secure the northern borders of England. And even though the English did not decisively defeat the Scots, the strategy to invade deep enough to create a sort of buffer zone was successful.[167] The victories in Scotland were a story of, not *personal* victory for the king, but a *national* victory for all of England. Ormrod notes that Edward III made sure to dig "deep into the popular rhetoric" that stressed the need to be vigilant against the ongoing threat of the Scots.[168] Indeed, Scotland was at the

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[164] McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, 116.
[165] In *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry*, Caudrey begins with Halidon Hill as the mark of the long string of victories that those who fought alongside Edward III would look back on with a warm nostalgia (Caudrey, 148).
[166] Gray, *Scalacronica,* 99.
[167] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 178.
[168] Ormrod, 177. Between 1333 and 1337, Scottish nobles had mustered troops and fought well against the English and the Scottish allies led by King Edward Balliol, most notably, the

forefront of political, military, and national concern in England until 1337, when the debate would turn away from the generally successful but ongoing conflict with Scotland, and towards France.

The genesis of the Hundred Years War seems to have been Philip VI's decision to seize Aquitaine and claim it in full sovereignty in 1337.[169] Because his justification lay on an argument of Edward III, as vassal of Aquitaine, not fulfilling his feudal obligations, it appeared to be a feudal dispute between two knights. However, it is evident from the military strategy and official rhetoric that the English were not concerned with the king's rights over Aquitaine, but the king's rights over the entire kingdom of France. Many historians have suggested that the Hundred Years War was a struggle over Aquitaine that got out of hand, and that Edward III had claimed to be the rightful king of France only as a diversionary tactic. Alternatively, another line of reasoning is that Edward III's declaration to be the rightful ruler of France was not a political tactic or a silly idealization, but a true goal of his regime.[170]

For the English to deal with the bothersome Scots and pursue ambitions in France, they required financial support, firm alliances, and a well of popular support at home. Embarking on a grand campaign to France without popular support would prove fruitless, or worse, catastrophic. Political harmony was vital for harnessing the support of the political community.

If Edward III would have died around 1341, around the time of his most tense struggle with his nobles, then his reign would have been a complete failure. Having plunged England into a full-scale war with France and having a young heir of his own in Edward of Woodstock, England would be faced with a daunting future. Edward's early campaigns in

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earl of Moray, and his sister "Black Agnes." There is a reason why Edward III granted palatinate powers to some of the earls in the north.

[169] Philip of Valois (r. 1328-50) succeeded Charles IV after the latter's death in 1328. He was the first French king from the House of Valois. He claimed his right to rule from his grandfather, Philip III (r. 1270-85).

[170] John Le Patourel, *Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet*. History Series (Hambledon Press; 18. London: Hambledon Press, 1984), XII, 179-89. Le Patourel bases his argument off the details of the Second Treaty of London, which preceded the Treaty of Calais of 1360. In the treaty, Edward III demanded outright sovereignty over all former Angevin holdings of Henry II, plus Calais and Ponthieu. Unlike the Treaty of Calais, Edward III did not drop his title as king of France as part of his official title. Patourel is of the view that even though this treaty was not realized that it was not a document of desirous wishes either, and it was only the failed campaign of 1359-60 that altered the direction of the final treaty.

France recruited armies of a more cosmopolitan variety, drawing from nobilities of the Low Countries and Germany.[171] Malcolm Vale argues that the first phase of the Hundred Years War, a failure that it was, may have contributed to a more nationalist feeling in the later years because Edward III had learned that he could not simply rely on alliances on the Continent.[172] He needed to rationalize the war as a national endeavor that could harness the chivalry of England that relied on the financial support of English merchants, not Italian bankers. The crisis of 1341 was a reckoning on the leadership of Edward III, and would test the relationship that he had sewn with the political community throughout the 1330s to its outer limits.

In May of 1337, Philip VI claimed sovereign jurisdiction over Aquitaine, and in October of that year, Edward III claimed that he was rightful king of France and that Philip VI was an imposter and usurper.[173] Edward III appealed to his right to the throne of France by his mother, Isabella, the daughter of the deceased king of France, Philip IV. It was true that Edward III was the nearest male relative to Charles IV as his nephew. But Philip, the grandson of Philip III and therefore the cousin of Isabella, had the support of the bulk of the French nobility. The French also asserted Salic law, which held that no female was permitted to inherit. Because Edward III received his claim from his mother's line, he was a false heir.

As they moved from town to town in northern France, the English army left manifestos on church doors that articulated the "moral authority" of Edward's claims.[174] Edward III's claim was not a claim of a would-be conqueror, but a claim founded on moral authority that sought to restore the natural political order. Indeed, Edward III articulated in his communications with the French people that he would rule in the manner as St Louis, a king who Edward III lionized.[175]

Whether the English held the moral ground or not, by the late summer of 1339, their supplies were running dangerously low, and they had begun to lose confidence from a number

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[171] Malcolm Vale, *The Origins of the Hundred Years War: The Angevin Legacy, 1250-1340* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996), 269.
[172] Ibid.
[173] McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century,* 127.
[174] Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade,* 193. St Louis was popular in northern France but had been despised by those in southern France. Thus, it would be more helpful for Edward III to appeal to St Louis in his northern campaign, and not in any campaigns in Gascony.
[175] Ibid.

of his continental allies.[176] Edward's early campaign was mostly focused in the Low Countries and Normandy, but because it was not fruitful, there was an increasing sentiment that the war may be a waste of time and drain on economic resources of the realm. Poor harvests in England had led to suffering domestic economy and higher taxes were bemoaned in the poem *Song Against the King's Taxes* which decried the extravagance of the royal household as the English people starved.[177]

 After the Flemish towns of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres expelled the Count of Flanders, they renegotiated their alliance with England.[178] This led to positive developments concerning the wool embargo, but the English were forced to deal with the increasing threat of privateers on the English channel as well.[179] In 1340, the English defeated the much larger French fleet in the naval battle of Sluys. Even though it did not contribute to a major shift in the war, it was an underdog victory which gave them naval supremacy over the English Channel for the time being.[180]

The English army's inability to draw the French army into open conflict by 1341, even though they had the victory of Sluys under their belt, raised skepticism among the nobility and on the domestic home front. If Edward III's policy of royal patronage and friendship with his nobility could not lead to victory, the political elite were lacking a justification to continue supporting war beyond mere chivalric adventurism.

In 1341, the English army returned to England. Upon arriving, the incensed king ridiculed Archbishop John Stratford, his chancellor and treasurer, for not giving the army ample financial support for the Flanders campaign. Stratford, who likely saw himself as another Thomas Becket, would not bend to the king's will, and during the Parliament of 1341, the king's tendency for selfishness was apparent. He agreed to give parliamentary control over the audit and financial accounts of the baronial council, the council that worked in tandem with the Crown.[181] Whether Edward realized it or not, this devolution of fiscal

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[176] McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century,* 127-28.
[177] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 210-11.
[178] McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century,* 128.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 223-4.
[181] Lyon, *A Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England,* 488.

responsibility also may have given certain members of Parliament a sense of investment for his endeavors.

Even though tensions flared during 1341 between Edward III and the nobility who were upset with his failure to deliver military and financial success, Edward III showed a deeper loyalty to the policy that he had shown throughout the 1330s. In the end, he "commanded a wider circle of high-ranking clergy and aristocrats who regarded themselves as welcome guests at court and rightful royal counsellors."[182] The 1341 Parliament created a rift between Edward III and Stratford that never really healed. Edward III's ability to resist lashing out, and instead invite criticism, showed real growth in the character of the king.

The policy of reconciliation and royal patronage had paid off in a big way. If the seeds of political harmony had not been laid in those formative years, a nobility that had a history of raising arms against the king may be compelled to repeat those actions. The Parliament of 1341 decided on the issue of rights of the members of Parliament and the accountability of the royal ministers. Because Parliament made sure that the king could not simply run roughshod over them, it became self-evident to acknowledge that a politics of consensus was far more conducive to good government. 1341 was a test on whether harmony could really last a serious crisis between the king on one side, and the nobility and the commons on the other. It concluded with a reconciliation between Edward and Stratford, who exchanged the kiss of peace at Westminster in 1343.[183] As Ormrod eloquently describes the aftermath of the 1341 crisis, "the sense of loyalty that Edward had cultivated among the old and new nobility in the 1330s bore its first sweet fruits in the spring and summer of 1341."[184]

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[182] *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1333-37*, 327, 346, 493, 507; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 137.
[183] Ormrod, 244.
[184] Ormrod, 246.

CHAPTER 4

CHIVALRIC CULTURE

We have examined the political and economic context of the early fourteenth century and the elements that led to political harmony that helped the cause of war in the late 1330s and early 1340s. This chapter seeks to explore the role of chivalric culture as a part of national unity and the formation of a bond that connected the community of the realm to a shared sense of a common cause. However the Hundred Years War was prosecuted, it provided an opportunity for the English martial elite to demonstrate their prowess by embarking on a chivalric adventure. The notion that friends are made in the midst of adventure was fostered by Edward III and his comrades-in-arms and is apparent in the writing of chroniclers such as Jean Froissart and Jean le Bel.[185] Lastly, the institution of the Order of the Garter became a fulfillment the chivalric cultural revival that Edward III oversaw. The knightly company's purpose was to gather knights to serve the royal and national interest of England.

Chivalric Cultural Revival

Chivalry was an ethos composed of fundamentally knightly values that upheld idealistic notions of warfare, the Church, and the beloved, while exalting the pursuit of personal glory and romanticizing the brutal reality of warfare. Because of its natural aristocratic and martial make-up, it relied on the perpetuation of warfare – or the imitation of warfare – as a means of expression. As the coming centuries proved, literature and tournaments became the main vessels for chivalric expression.[186] Contemporary writers largely discouraged the violence that seemed to always follow chivalric devotion.[187] This is

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[185] Froissart was a French court poet and chronicler born from a bourgeois family. He served Queen Philippa of Hainaut from 1361 to 1369. He returned to Hainaut after her death in 1369. His chronicle draws off of Jean le Bel's chronicle. Jean le Bel was a French canon who notably chose to write his chronicles in French rather than Latin. Both Froissart and le Bel were known to use interviews to confirm aspects of their accounts.

[186] Heraldry and art were also important aspects of chivalric expression.

[187] Richard Kaeuper and Monte Bohna, "War and Chivalry." in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, C.1350-c.1500*, ed. Peter Brown (Blackwell Pub., 2007), 282-

partially why the Crusades were promoted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They provided a "virtuous" outlet for knights who wished to express their chivalric credentials. Even though the virtues of *largesse*, courtliness, and service to ladies were important, Kaeuper notes that one should not forget that prowess was the central tenet of chivalry: "even if other qualities are admired, a man must have prowess to count."[188]

The centrality of prowess is why chivalry emerged out of the feudal context. An individual knight could display his prowess to his companions and lord, thereby proving his worth and fortifying the sense of loyalty between him and his lord. If one commanded prowess, he could display other virtues as an outgrowth: their kind treatment of fallen opponents, for example.[189] An important aspect of feudalism was the ability to exercise chivalric virtues because it was expected of a knight's social status. It is for this reason that courtly love became so fashionable (primarily in the literary realm) during the fourteenth century.[190] Chivalric culture was opened to women in a way that had not really been prominent before.

In the Old French epics, the lady played a minor part. In the *Song of Roland*, for example, Aude, Roland's fiancé, has an inconsequential role and might as well not even exist for the story. Following the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, and especially Marie de France's *lais* in the twelfth century, the lady began to take on a much more active role. Love from the lady inspires a knight to conduct feats of prowess, and feats of prowess inspires love from the woman.[191] In a literary culture in which the lady played a more critical role for a knight to achieve glory, it makes sense that in a time when literature was often imitated by real life that the lady would play a larger role in chivalric activities. In the county of Hainaut, women played a role in tournament processions. Low Countries' influence can be felt in the

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3. In "War and Chivalry" Kaeuper and Bohna direct their attention to chivalry as an often misunderstood subject because it is especially tempting to romanticize its history.

[188] Kaueper and Bohna, 274.

[189] Nigel Saul, *Age of Chivalry,* 29.

[190] There was a set of hangings in one of the royal chambers at Windsor that depicted scenes from *Assault on the Castle of Love* (Ormrod, *Edward III,* 144). This scene is most prominent in the allegorical tale called the *Romance of the Rose*, which was the most widely-owned non-religious book in the Middle Ages.

[191] Kaeuper and Bohna, "War and Chivalry," 280. Among the examples that Kaeuper gives is Guinevere from *Prose Merlin*.

increasingly elaborate inaugurating tournaments and elaborate processions in which women participated alongside men.[192]

Edward III was unlike his predecessors in his expression of these chivalric activities. Henry III and Edward II saw chivalric activities, not as a way for the Crown and the noble to come together, but for the nobility to gather and plot against the Crown. That it was a cynical view did not mean that it was not a valid one. After the signing of Magna Carta, barons found tournaments to be an opportune way to reassemble themselves in opposition to King John.[193] Henry III's actions on tournaments suggest that he was increasingly paranoid that they may be used as a way for nobles to oppose his authority. He sought to forbid a tournament at Brackley in 1219, then at Chepstow in 1226, then at Dunstable in 1244.[194] It was during a tournament in 1312 when the English baronage assembled in opposition to Piers Gaveston.[195] Certainly, there was reason for Edward II's belief that chivalric activities simply provided opportunities for the political elite to "foment rebellion and recruit private armies for civil war."[196]

Edward III, however, increased the number of chivalric games. Unlike Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II, Edward III was willing to allow the great nobles to hold their own tournaments on occasion.[197] This policy was likely a combination of his personal fascination with chivalric culture and a pragmatic way to keep a watchful eye on the nobility. Like many of his policies, he seems to have been able to marry personal interest with pragmatism. He understood how devoted the political community was to chivalric culture, and what better way to place a check on the expression of chivalry than to claim to be the purveyor of its culture?

Throughout the 1330s, Edward III wanted to hold tournaments and promote the production of heraldic arms because they helped form a bond among the political elite. And the martial-minded barons and knights were happy to oblige. In 1329, after Edward paid

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[192] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 101-2. Since Philippa of Hainaut brought an entourage with her, England was set on a course to be influenced by certain practices from Hainaut and other places on the Continent.

[193] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984)*,* 97.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 143.

[197] While Edward forbade a number of private tournaments, it was not a general policy of his.

homage to Philip VI for Aquitaine, he held jousts at Canterbury, Dartford, and Reigate to celebrate.[198] In 1330, he commissioned ceremonial jackets for those who had helped him in the Nottingham coup.[199] The first full year of his majority reign, he held tournaments at Dartford, Havering, Bedford, and Cheapside in the summer of 1331.[200] These tournaments each served as a way to bring together the knights of England and celebrate English arms and monarchy. Ormrod describes Edward's policy of elaborate celebrations as largely a consequence of Edward's own "youthful exuberance and princely excess," but also deliberately designed "to revive the credibility of a damaged institution and to win it new respect at home and abroad."[201]

Upon his majority reign in 1330, Edward III was well-aware of the faith that had been lost in the Crown over the previous two decades. To conjure extravagant displays of chivalric devotion was clearly a way to rectify such a problem. Edward III knew how weak the Crown was at the start of 1330. He could not make many mistakes lest his own political elite raise concerns over his rule.

Roger Mortimer had continued the precedent of unpopular rule from 1327 until his execution in 1330.[202] Edward III's hesitant employment of himself as a Second Arthur suggests that he was cautious in associating himself with his mother's dead lover. Roger Mortimer had claimed that he was the Second Arthur and promoted the mythos of King Arthur and the pseudo-historical history of Geoffrey Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which provided a near-perfect past for the Plantagenet dynasty. As he did on many occasions, Edward III dressed – not as King Arthur – but as a generic knight named Sir Lionel. In 1333, he dressed as this generic knight at the tournament, and again in 1334 at the tournament at Dunstable.[203] By presenting himself as an ordinary knight, Edward III showed humility by

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[198] Ormrod, 83.

[199] Ormrod, 104. The ceremonial jackets were of green and purple velvet and silk embroidered with gold and silver thread.

[200] Ormrod, 96.

[201] Ormrod, 97.

[202] Like the Despensers whom he had just overthrown, Mortimer used the powers of his royal position to accumulate wealth and land. He was made the 1st earl of March in 1328. What made matters worse is that Edward III and many northern nobles were outraged with the weak Treaty of Northampton that had been made with the Scots. Once again, it was the earl of Lancaster (Henry) who briefly rose arms against Mortimer.

[203] Ormrod, 99.

setting aside the majesty of the royal persona to show his devotion to the chivalric ethos and solidarity with the chivalric elite.[204] It also demonstrated his propensity to be conservative-minded. In keeping to the knightly values of valor and virtue, he was subscribing to centuries-old tradition.[205]

The 1330s were critical years for the king to build a positive rapport with the political community, and build one he did. Edward III's purveyance of chivalric culture served as a primary way to form a sense of comradery. Between 1331 and 1341, Edward held at least thirty tournaments.[206] Clearly, he was taking a cue from his more successful grandfather than the weak reigns of Edward II and Henry III. Their policies were repressive and enforced more as a reactive defense mechanism to dissuade uprisings. Edward III's policy, to a much greater degree than even Edward I, was an active policy that "enhanced the prestige of his court and to strengthen the ties which bound him and his knightly companions together."[207]

Not only were tournaments a place for the male political elite to bond, but for the noblewomen to thrive as well. As I mentioned earlier, due to the influence from Queen Philippa, women participated in chivalric culture in a way that went beyond the literary works of the Arthurian legends and other romances like those told of the Nine Worthies.[208] Women played the part of spectators by giving inspiration to the knights. On such an occasion, Alice Perrers, the king's mistress in the final years of his reign, rode in procession from the Tower of London through Cheapside, and over to Smithfield, where one of Edward III's last tournaments was held in 1375.[209] She rode as "the lady of the sun" and would have been seen as a majestic figure as she made her way through the streets of London, no doubt being watched by hundreds of Londoners.

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[204] Painter and Ormrod discuss the knightly tradition of knights showing equal status to each other and giving distinction that was based on prowess (and virtue).

[205] Ormrod, 104.

[206] Ormrod, 143.

[207] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 101.

[208] The Nine Worthies were a popular convention in literature and art and formed the historical models for knighthood. Queen Philippa gifted Edward III a silver cup with the art of the Nine Worthies on it in 1333. Alexander the Great, Hector, Julius Caesar, Joshua, King David, Judas Maccabeus, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon made up the nine.

[209] Caroline Barron, "Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London" in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 221.

After a day of jousting, these very noblewomen could let themselves be known at the banquets and dances.[210] And it was Edward III's queen who led the way. Philippa was found in regular attendance at jousts, and Barber says that "her presence in the stands gave increased respectability to the sport and encouraged other women to attend."[211] Men were not the only players in the political world, for women could be feudal lords, and the most powerful of wives. Queen Philippa led an army more than once while Edward was in France, and it was the regular duty of noblewomen to rule the estate in the absence of the lord.[212]

What marks Edward III's reign out from the previous reigns was not only the extravagance that was bestowed on tournaments, jousts, and feasts, but the degree to which those not of the highest levels of the political elite, man or woman, could participate in this chivalric cultural revival. The bond that was forged between the Crown and the nobility was strengthened through chivalric culture, but the bond between the nobility and the Crown with those of the merchant classes must also be noted.

Thanks to cultural influence from Hainaut and the changing structure of English political society, merchants and burgesses could participate in chivalric rituals more than ever before. Caroline Barron notes that because chivalry was fundamentally martial and aristocratic, one would not expect to find it flourishing among the "mercantile urban communities" of Ghent and Bruges.[213] In the fourteenth century, however, it was common for the "urban patriciate" to "promote, and to participate in, *festes* and tournaments" and pay for the heralds, erect scaffolding, and enclose the marketplaces.[214] Barron says that even the local burgesses joined with the nobles in the chivalric games.[215] This was the culture Queen Philippa and her entourage had come from. While there appears to be no evidence that

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[210] Jennifer C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (London; New York: Longman, 1992), 74. Ward notes that noblewomen displayed their power and status most through the food and drink that was offered at banquets, the entertainment at feasts, and the splendor of the settings (p. 75). With the numerous tournament feasts held during Edward III's reign, Philippa and her servants had many occasions to cultivate a reputation to other visiting noblewomen.
[211] Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 174.
[212] Most notably, Philippa gathered English forces to engage the Scots near Durham, which resulted in a decisive victory for the English at the battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. She also served as regent of the kingdom while Edward was abroad.
[213] Barron, "Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London," 219.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.

chivalric games in England were at all civically-sponsored events, or that members of the merchant class actually participated in the games, they participated in the wider chivalric culture. Londoners and merchants were invited as guests to the banquets and feasts, and were spectators at the fifty-five tournaments that took place under the sponsorship of Edward III's court.[216]

Expectantly, merchants' primary role in chivalric culture had to do with trade and money. After all, the image-conscious nobility had to get their textiles from somewhere, and the spectacles that formed the elaborate tournaments had to be collected from merchant cogs. It was in the self-interest of English merchants to support chivalric practices of the elite because it meant more money for them.

At a festival held at Windsor in 1344, Edward III invited the prominent London burgesses and their wives to the feasts, along with the earls, barons, and knights of the land. In the 1330s, a new custom had been instituted by Edward III in which the most prominent London citizens were knighted. Two merchants, William and Richard de la Pole, were knighted for their financial services. McFarlane notes that knighting a non-knight was a major development it showed that "merchants and money-lenders could enter the order of chivalry under that most chivalrous king."[217]

The 1330s and early 1340s were formative years for Edward III and his relationship with the political community. What I have outlined here shows that chivalric culture was used to forge a common identity between the Crown and the nobility. The bond between the higher noblemen and noblewomen and the Crown was certainly the strongest The engagement of merchants and burgesses was far more indirect at this time, and their interest with chivalric culture seems to be incipient at best However, Ormrod's words are correct that the bond of friendship that Edward III was keen on promoting among the political community could be felt through the celebration of chivalric cultural revival.[218] While the chivalric cultural revival most directly affected the relationship between the Crown and the nobility, it was a fundamental aspect that strengthened the bond of national unity. With a sense of common identity and political harmony, the English elite could turn their gaze to France.

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[216] Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry,* 172-4.
[217] McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England,* 165.
[218] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 104.

Common Cause: Chivalric Adventure and the French Wars

That the Hundred Years War provided an opportunity for English knights to display their chivalric virtues is apparent in the writings of Jean Froissart. Philippa of Hainaut patronized Froissart from 1361 until her death in 1369. Froissart customarily wrote in a high-minded, courtly poetic style which sought to embellish any and all acts that may be construed to emulate courtly behavior and knightly values. While his literary mind glamorizes the brutal reality of warfare, the fact that the English martial aristocracy saw the wars in France as a way to imitate the heroes of romance was, most assuredly, a conceivable notion. The idea of a merry band of knights travelling from England to pursue a noble cause was a powerful ingredient for pride within the ranks of Edward III's army. While a knight's desire for material gain or personal fame was almost always the primary reason for his willingness to fight, the guise of fighting for a noble goal surely resonated with an overarching sense of a national cause. The Hundred Years War connected the reality of profit and prestige with more transcendent notions of national unity that sought to connect all members of the English political community together for a common objective. Edward III and those in his army could set out on a basis of a national cause in the midst of chivalric adventure-seeking.

When describing the events that led up to the great battle of Crécy, Jean le Bel gives glowing praise to Edward III:

> King Edward...cannot be honoured too highly, for in all his deeds he always followed sound advice, and loved his men and knights and squires, and honoured each man according to his degree, and defended his land well against his enemies (and won a good deal from them), and bravely put his life at stake alongside his men both at home and abroad, and paid his troops and allies well and gave generously of his own wealth; for these reasons all should be glad to serve him and he deserves to be called 'noble king.'[219]

Because Edward III was thought of so highly by many of his contemporaries – chroniclers, churchmen, and knights alike – it would be difficult to know the true character of

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[219] Jean Le Bel, *True Chronicles,* 167-68. Froissart credits le Bel's chronicles for informing much of his own writings.

a king who is described as "noble" and one who understood the value of *largesse*.[220] There is no question, however, that Edward was a popular king who had earned the markings of a good king because of his acts of *largesse* – whether they were out of his generous character or shrewd policy is unclear, but it was likely a combination of the two.

The Crécy campaign began in 1346. The English army was composed of the king, the prince, the earls of Northampton, Warwick, Oxford, Arundel, Huntingdon, and Suffolk, along with Hugh Despenser, the young Roger Mortimer, and several thousand men-at-arms.[221] When they landed in Normandy in July 1346, Edward III, in a special ceremony of chivalry, knighted his eldest son, the newly-invested earl of Salisbury, and the young Roger Mortimer.[222]

For the next few weeks, the English army wreaked devastating havoc on the French countryside as they employed the *chevauchée* tactic that Edward had used in Scotland. Sacking and looting as they went, their first major victory was Caen, the capital of Normandy. Here, the roles were reversed. Wherein, the Normans had invaded England triumphantly in 1066, now so was an English king invading Normandy and sacking the wealthy capital. Losing Caen meant that this English campaign was far more dangerous of a threat to the kingdom of France than it had been in the Flemish and Breton campaigns of the previous several years.

There are several accounts of the battle of Crécy, but the most artful ones come from the hand of Froissart. Ormrod has argued that the English tactic to pillage and burn the farms and fields of the French countryside was not merely a strategy intended to weaken the economy. It was not designed to draw out the elusive Philip VI of France into open battle, but to send a message to the French people that Philip VI was a poor king who could not or would

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[220] Painter describes *largesse* as the first virtue to arise from the two cornerstone chivalric virtues of prowess and loyalty (Painter, 30).

[221] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum,* 199. Edward III is estimated at gathering an army nearing 20,000. Saul puts the number at 14-15,000 (Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 96). Due to the renewed problem of the Scots, he exempted several of the northern lords from joining the army. The Scots had been in communication with the French. Philip VI had wanted the Scots to invade to the north to make the English fight on two fronts.

[222] This Roger Mortimer was the grandson of the 1st earl of March and the son of Edmund Mortimer. The Mortimer family lands and titles were stripped following Roger Mortimer's execution in 1330. Roger Mortimer became the 2nd earl of March in 1354.

not defend his own lands.[223] The English were not necessarily looking for an open battle with the much larger French army as much as they were carrying out a raiding campaign in order to convey a message of the English king's superior virtue. As the English "robbed, wasted and piled the good, plentiful country of Normandy," Philip VI responded by recruiting the aid of the Count of Hainaut.

It was in late August when the king of France decided that he needed to challenge the English army. Not only were the English laying waste to the countryside, but Edward had garnered several minor French nobles to his side during the campaigns at Caen, Amiens, and Blanche-taque.[224] Philip VI was also facing criticism from his own magnates for not facing the English king, and he had been called a coward – something a man of chivalrous character could not permit.[225] Thus, he followed Edward's army. It was near Crécy that they would finally face each other. In a scene that reminds one of a tale of romance, Froissart describes the English on the eve of battle: "the king made a supper to all his chief lords of his host and made them good cheer."[226]

The English archers who won the day against the heavily-mounted French knights.[227] The English were formatted in three divisions: one led by the prince of Wales, another led by the veteran earl of Northampton, and the third led by the king. After describing the details of battle, Froissart notes that there were "many a feat of arms done that came not to my knowledge."[228] In a testament to Edward III's unflinching devotion to chivalry, Froissart accounts the infamous scene when the prince of Wales's army is being overrun:

> Then the knight said to the king: 'Sir, the earl of Warwick, and the earl of Oxford, Sir Raynold Cobham and others, such as be about the prince your son, are fiercely fought withal and are sore handled; wherefore they desire that you and your battle will come and aid them; for if the Frenchmen increase, as they doubt they will, your son and they shall have much ado.' Then the king said: 'Is my son dead or hurt or on the earth

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[223] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 271-2.

[224] Froissart, *Chronicles*, *98.* Chief among them was Godfrey Harcourt, a Norman lord who had betrayed the French and sworn homage to Edward, claiming him as the true king of France.

[225] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 95.

[226] Froissart, *Chronicles, 102.*

[227] English longbowmen were becoming the most effective part of the English army since the reign of Edward I.

[228] Froissart, 105.

felled?' 'No, sir,' quoth the knight, 'but he is hardly matched; wherefore he hath need of your aid.' 'Well,' said the king, 'return to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth, as long as my son is alive: and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs; for if God be pleased, I will this journey be his honour and the honour thereof, and to them that be about him.'[229]

When the prince and earls are told of the king's decision not to send aid, Froissart says they were "greatly encouraged."[230] After the victory, Edward III commands Sir Reginald Cobham, "a most worthy knight," to take a herald and identify the arms of the slain French. The number of French dead lay at about 15-16,000, whereas the English lost around three hundred. The English had slain a generation of French nobility, including the blind king of Bohemia, the duke of Alençon, the king's brother, and the counts of Blois, Salm, Harcourt, Auxerre, Flanders, and Sancerre. At no other time had it been a fact that so many French nobles had been killed in a single day.[231]

Edward III had won his victory. The propaganda campaign was immediately underway. The French king had fled, the "cream of the French military elite" lay dead on the field, and God had blessed the English kingdom.[232] Edward III made sure to send word to England of the crushing victory. He wanted to notify the English people that his cause was not a feudal one, and that they were specially blessed. His aims were certainly ambitious, but they had paid off in 1346. Whatever skepticism remained within the political community – on the campaign in France or at home in England – it had dissipated with the victory at Crécy and the follow-up victory at Calais. Thomas Bradwardine, a clerk who accompanied the king's retinue, rhetorized the victory at Crécy and other victories as having been the result of God's will.[233]

Jean Froissart's framing of the battles of the Hundred Years War as chivalric adventures in which the king and his men sought fame, honor, and glory was more of an

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[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid. One would expect them to be frustrated at the king's comments, but instead, they are supposed to think that the king has great confidence in their abilities and that they will overcome their difficult circumstances – a conventional chivalric notion.

[231] Le Bel, *True Chronicles,* 183.

[232] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 98.

[233] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 282.

anachronism. Many of Edward's knights and men-at-arms were retainers, and were therefore paid as soldiers. The topic of the military revolution of the fourteenth century is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to know why the men of England (and the knights from Aquitaine) fought. Was it out of chivalric ambition? Fighting out of pure financial motivation was likely the primary factor, but knightly glory was also an accompanying aspect. It was crucial to Edward III and the nobility to frame the war in France as a national interest Not only was it important to gain support from the merchants of London and Parliament, but to give a sense of duty to those in England and under English rule in Gascony, and ignite a sense that, even though their feudal obligations to Edward were no longer important, their duty to the kingdom in which they lived was.[234]

McFarlane has suggested that the commoners who had enlisted in the king's army "made no pretense of fighting for love of king or lord, still less for England or for glory," but merely for profit."[235] This is a very cynical view, painting the soldiers as mere mercenaries. But even if the point is conceded that the primary motive for many of the men-at-arms to join was to fill their pockets, they may still be perceived as contributing to national unity and committing themselves to a common cause undertaken by the king of England the nobility.

The aristocracy had held military service as a central tenet of their collective consciousness for centuries. To milk the sense of a bond among the chivalric elite, to seek out parallels of a romance, the king and his comrades-in-arms could tell each other of their prowess and their virtue in the way of battle or rescuing a lady.

During the Scottish campaign, Edward III had displayed his chivalric credentials by riding "over the mountains, where he rescued the Countess of Atholl, who was besieged in Lochindorb."[236] When Edward III came to the castle of Poix on his way to Crécy, he found the town and castle deserted except "two fair damosels."[237] Froissart says that the two girls would have been violated by the commoners in the English army if not for the knights, John Chandos and Reginald Basset, who protected them and brought them to the king.[238] Edward

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[234] Understandably, Gascon knights would be much more difficult to convince of such an argument, given that they were of their own culture and had a complicated relationship with both England and France.
[235] Saul, *For Honour and Fame*, 117.
[236] Gray, *Scalacronica,* 123.
[237] Froissart, *Chronicles,* 99.
[238] Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1940), 145.

asks them where they wished to go, and when they tell him, he sends them on their way.[239] Later, when the French garrison at Calais finally surrendered, Froissart and Le Bel describe the moment of romance overtones when the knights and the queen weep and ask that Edward III show pity to the burghers of Calais.[240]

Showing mercy to the burghers would demonstrate his virtue of lordship and ability to heed the advice of his counsellors. Similarly, Sir Walter Mauny and Queen Philippa interject when Edward III is about to execute the burghers. Up to this point, the English army had moved on from Crécy to the strategically set and wealthy trading city of Calais. They besieged it for several months. Throughout those months Philip VI attempted to deliver reinforcements, all to no avail. Philip sought to parley with Edward, and goad him into a pitched battle, but much like his own tactics of 1340/41, Edward refused to give up his strategic advantage: practical strategy outweighed chivalric duty.[241] This strategy paid off in a meaningful way, for negotiations between representatives of the kings of France and England could not be reached. Philip VI made the fateful decision to abandon his own people at Calais and allow the English to take control.

Edward was happy to take advantage of this example that supported his earlier rhetoric that the "false" king of France was not a true king and could not protect his own people. The burghers of Calais decided that the best path was to surrender and fall on the mercy of the English. The king was faced with an opportunity to show mercy or withhold it. Le Bel tells us that Sir Walter Mauny spoke with the "worthy knights" that defended Calais and convinced the king not to execute them and hold them prisoner instead.[242] Edward III responds to Mauny's request by saying that he will spare the knights of Calais "for love of you," addressing his fellow knights.[243] In return, Edward wanted six burghers brought to him with the keys of the city.

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[239] The idea that the commoners were more likely to indulge their lust was a common conception arising out of the elitism of knighthood. It was the duty of noble knights to protect ladies from "lustful" men-at-arms. This scene is also an example of the character of one from a higher estate eclipsing the culture of English that the higher born knight and the common archer share. Painter explores episodes of courtly love in the midst of warfare in *French Chivalry* (95-148).

[240] Le Bel, *True Chronicles,* 202-203.

[241] Le Bel, 199.

[242] Le Bel, 200-1.

[243] Le Bel, 201.

Here, we get a scene that reminds one of a romance. Edward III demonstrates the high stock he puts on the advice and counsel of his knights and queen. These burghers are no knights, and thus, as a knight, Edward is not obliged to be merciful because they are not of noble status. But he set a precedent of being dealing with merchants and recognizing their political influence at Parliament, as I have discussed in the previous chapter. In this dialogue, once again, it is Walter Mauny, a knight, who speaks up: "Ah, gentle lord! Restrain your heart! You're renowned and famed for all noble qualities…"[244] But Mauny's petitioning is not enough to convince the king this time. It takes the queen, who had recently come to Calais to be with her husband. Le Bel says that she wept bitterly and fell on her knees, saying, "Since I crossed the sea – in great peril, as you know – I've asked for nothing. But now I beg and implore you with clasped hands, for the love of Our Lady's son, have mercy on them."[245] At this, Edward relents and spares all the people of Calais, for, what Le Bel calls, "love for [Philippa]."[246]

Chivalry and courtly love triumphed over hard-nosed strategy. This was the climax of the siege of Calais, which ended in August 1347. And on top of that, while at Calais, the army in France had received news from England of the battle of Neville's Cross, in which the northern forces, led by the Percy family and other northern nobles, destroyed the Scottish forces and captured King David II.[247] While the English laid siege at Calais, the home government – under the trustworthy hands of Philippa, archbishop Stratford, and others – was able to conjure a victory and place the king of Scotland in the Tower of London. Moreover, Henry of Grosmont had won several victories in the southern campaign in Aquitaine. When Philippa and other lords came to greet Edward at Calais, in 1347, Ormrod says that "with hundreds of English knights and esquires gathering in the retinues of these great lords, the siege of Calais turned into one of the greatest gatherings of English chivalry known in the later Middle Ages."[248]

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[244] Le Bel, 202.

[245] Le Bel, 203.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Lyon, *A Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England,* 489; Le Baker, *Chronicle,* 77. Baker says that the archbishop of York, together with the bishop of Carlisle, earl of Angus, lord Mowbray, lord Percy, lord Neville, and other nobles, with archers from Lancashire, met the Scottish forces.

[248] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 290.

The sound conclusion to the siege of Calais provided a fitting end to the glorious victories of the English, from Grosmont's victories in Aquitaine, the northern lords' victory at Neville's Cross and capture of David II, and Edward III and his nobles' victories from the sack of Caen, to the field of Crécy.[249] The victories were a national triumph and further added to a sense of national unity. From Scotland to Aquitaine, the English were victorious in 1346/7. It was a testament to the unity and cohesion of the political community during this era. The contemporary chronicler Jean le Bel provides a conclusionary statement after the victory at Calais:

> In my view...it should be considered a sign of great honour and a great blessing from God...that...[Edward] and his men had destroyed and laid waste the whole land of Scotland between the city of Perth and the great forest of Jedburgh, and won the city of Berwick and all surrounding fortresses, and elsewhere his men had ravaged and wasted all of Poitou and won many major towns and strong castles...and likewise the great land of Brittany; and...Normandy...and had then stood arrayed for battle, with a small army in open fields...to face the entire might of France...captured and killed all the greatest lords in the kingdom of France, the Empire, and Germany...It seems to me that such great and lofty exploits are not without high honour, and that one cannot praise, esteem or honour too much the very noble king whom God so clearly wished to help.[250]

The spiritedness of the English political community seemed to be at a maximal level. The victories won at Crécy and Calais were all the more great because they were won unexpectedly. The victory of the smaller English force over the much larger French force drew parallels to the biblical narrative of David and Goliath and the underdog element that seemed to be prevalent in English society.[251] With these unexpected but decisive triumphs, the international reputation of English arms and English chivalry grew to unfounded heights.[252] When the English army under Edward III returned to England in October 1347, six tournaments were held over the following ten months to celebrate the great victories.[253]

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[249] Edward of Woodstock, Edward III's eldest son, has been called the "Black Prince" since the early modern era. It is due to his supposed ceremonial black armor.
[250] Le Bel, *True Chronicles,* 204-5.
[251] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 293.
[252] Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry,* 147.
[253] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 102-3. Edward dressed extravagantly each time, and his retinue was dressed in the French colors of blue and white at the tournament at Lichfield,

Following the Crécy campaign, Edward III sought to capitalize on English triumphalism by founding the Order of the Garter.

Even though many of Edward's projects (including the innovations at Windsor) were stalled because of the calamitous Black Death and various economic downturns, the spirit of triumph did not dissipate. In France, John II succeeded Philip VI in 1350 and renewed a sense of Valois usurpation of Plantagenet rights over the kingdom of France.[254] In that same year, Edward III and the Black Prince notched another victory.[255] The battle of Winchelsea was a naval battle fought between a Castilian fleet and the English fleet. The Castilians were hired by the French to blockade the Channel so the English could not send support to Aquitaine.[256] As the English fleet awaited the arrival of the Spanish, Edward III and his comrades-in-arms on the *Thomas* listened to minstrels play a German dance that had been brought to England by Sir John Chandos.[257] Chandos began to sing himself right before the Spanish ships were sighted and the battle erupted.

The English prevailed once again, albeit in a narrower victory. In the midst of the battle, Henry of Lancaster rescued the Black Prince's ship as it sank.[258] That night, in a scene out of a chivalric adventure, the king and his sons anchored the fleet at Winchelsea and rode to the monastery where Philippa and her ladies had been praying for victory. Upon their arrival at Pevensey, "the lords and ladies passed [the] night in great revel, speaking of war and of love."[259]

If the prince of Wales had not yet "won his spurs," as Edward III had supposedly remarked during the battle of Crécy, the prince was going to win much more in 1356 at Poitiers. In a campaign that began in 1355, the English army crushed a French army led by the

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likely to communicate the message that his claims over the throne of France had been vindicated and legitimized by God by delivering such victories to the English.
[254] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 327.
[255] Robert of Avesbury, *De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii,* 412.
[256] Ormrod, *Edward III,* 328.
[257] Blanche Christabel Hardy, *Philippa of Hainault and Her Times* (England: J. Long, 1910), 214.
[258] G. G. Coulton, *Chaucer and His England* (England: Methuen, 1908), 176.
[259] Hardy, *Philippa of Hainault and Her Times,* 215. Coulton, 176. The battle of Winchelsea is often overlooked as a minor battle, but Hardy notes that like Sluys, it had earned Edward III the title of "King of the Sea" and reaffirmed the preeminent position of English sovereignty over the waters. In perhaps no other battle had the king, prince, and other key nobles like Henry of Lancaster been vulnerable to being slain or captured.

king of France. From one viewpoint, it seemed like a replay of Crécy, but this time, John II was captured, and many other French nobles slain. What set Poitiers apart from earlier victories was the pedigree of prisoners who were taken.[260] The king, the dauphin, various counts and archbishops had all been captured at a battle wherein the "French elite had been stripped of a significant part of its political and military high command," and the younger generation of English chivalry, led by the Black Prince, could celebrate and proclaim that the age of victory was far from over.[261] As long as victory could be achieved on the fields of France – and not on the fields of England – so could the political community reaffirm their superiority and sit on their laurels.

National Chivalry: The Order of the Garter

With a bevy of victories, Edward III returned to England in autumn 1347 and celebrated by arranging a series of tournaments.[262] The methods that Edward III's regime used to amplify the feelings of national pride would certainly lend a boost to the prestige of the English martial elite and its knighthood. The victories of the Crécy campaign were monumentalized in a new chivalric company. The Order of the Garter was founded in 1348, and emerged out of the aura of triumphalism for English arms and the preeminence of the successful pursuit of a common cause. The Order served as a monument for the superiority of England's chivalry in France while also conveying a "middle finger" to the French monarchy. It also led to Windsor being the emergent center of English government, and a clever way of undermining the inherent individualism of knighthood in favor of a nationalized identity.

In 1344, notably before the Crécy campaign, Edward III attempted to found an Arthurian order of knights and re-found Round Table. At this time, he was known for the victories at Halidon Hill, Sluys, and minor victories in Brittany. None of these vaulted him into the hall of heroes. In the first section of this chapter, I examined the affinity towards Arthurian chivalry that Edward expressed, including his costumes and his decision to dress as

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[260] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 352.

[261] Ibid, 215.

[262] Hugh Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England*. Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2000), 12.

the generic knight "Sir Lionel" in tournaments, thereby abandoning his royal position for the sake of keeping to the chivalric virtue of knights fighting on equal terms.[263] One of the accounts of the Round Table of 1344 comes from Adam Murimuth, who describes the "*mensam rotundam...dimisit dominus Arthurus quondam rex Angliae,*" and puts the number of companions (*comites*) at three hundred.[264] Among the companions of the Garter company are the earls of Derby, Salisbury, Warwick, Arundel, Pembroke, Suffolk, "[and many other barons and knights]" who had proven themselves to be upright and of good reputation.[265]

The Round Table idea was abandoned and never returned to during Edward III's reign. But why Edward suddenly abandoned it remains a mystery. It is likely the tragic and untimely death of Edward III's closest friend, William Montagu, halted the Round Table plans.[266] Perhaps as an homage to his deceased friend, Edward moved on.

Four years later, the Order of the Garter filled the vacuum once filled by the Round Table project. Two aspects of the Order that are peculiar are the choice of color and the motto. The arms of St George was composed of a red cross on a white field. The leopards of England were red and gold. It was the French *fleur de lis* that was blue and white. But Edward chose a small blue belt buckled to itself in a circle of blue.[267] The motto, unlike most of Edward III's mottoes, was in French rather than English.[268] The motto, "Shame on him who thinks ill of it," is a puzzling one. First, if Edward III wished to form a national chivalric order, why would he choose the language of his chief enemy? If French was still the international language, but English was in the process of being a more widely-used language among

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[263] Painter, *French Chivalry*, 33.

[264] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 232.

[265] Ibid: "alii barones et milites quam plures, quos probitas et fama promovit laude fore dignos…"

[266] Ibid: "dominus Willelmus de Monte acuto, Sarisburiae comes, in hastiludiis praedictis frustratus, mortem subiit naturalem." William Montagu, earl of Salisbury, died from wounds he sustained at a tournament. His wife, the countess of Salisbury, had been at the heart of a rumor that was circulated as anti-English propaganda that alleged that Montagu had been a cuckold and Edward III was carrying on a passionate affair with the infamously beautiful Catherine Montagu (Ormrod, *Edward III*, 136).

[267] Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 68. Choosing blue over red meant that Edward III believed his claim to the French throne to have been validated and also distinct from his title as king of England.

[268] Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry,* 76.

members of the political community, why would the king honor the French? What is it that the motto refers to?

Some historians have suggested that the motto refers to the choice of a garter for the symbol.[269] After all, the legend of the garter was associated with Edward III and the romantic rumors surrounding him and the countess of Salisbury. More likely, the motto was meant as a repudiation of those who thought ill of his claims to the throne of France. It was Edward's contention, probably, that in dedicating the Order to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St George, that his cause was a moral one. Surely, Edward III's intentions were questioned by contemporaries as to whether he believed in his claims to the throne of France himself, or if he was using it cynically to win over alliances and instill a sense of faux moral superiority for his cause. Keen argues that a major purpose of the Order of the Garter was "to glamourize the standing of the war which [Edward] was waging against the king of France – to present the war effort in the light of a great adventure pursue by a noble and valiant company of knights against an adversary who was unjustly withholding from their sovereign his rightful inheritance."[270] By choosing French colors and a French motto, Edward III was taking his position in a matter-of-fact way and communicating to all of Europe that his position as king of France was distinct from his lordship over England. He did not wish to "anglify" the French people. Instead, he wanted to rule the French in the way he believed was best for them, not based on how he ruled the English.

Even though the Order accepted foreign knights into its ranks (three Garter knights of the initial twenty-four were foreign knights who had served on Edward III's French campaigns), a Garter knight had to swear fealty to the king of England, who would always be the president of the Order. Therefore, the Garter, even though it included knights who may possess other allegiances, by their induction, a foreign knight had to swear allegiance to the English king. This could prove quite favorable to English interests.[271] This idea, along with the nationalization of knighthood that encompasses this examination of the Order of the

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[269] Boulton, Collins, and Vale all surmise on what the motto specifically referred to. However, the consensus is that it refers to those who thought ill of his claim to the throne of France, likely other European powers.

[270] Keen, *Chivalry*, 184.

[271] Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 346.

Garter, shows that Edward was not of a mind that would exclude those who were not English, but those who would not recognize the superiority of English knighthood.

It has been noted that the companions-in-arms who were selected for the first litany of Garter knights were chosen because they were key for English victory in France – with a slight advantage to those who fought at Crécy. But among the "First Founders," Barber argues that they may have been chosen for political reasons as well, to "avoid alienating a faction of the English nobility," such as the young Roger Mortimer.[272] The king wanted the Order to encapsulate a wide array of knights from across the various levels of the political community. Among those he chose, Edward III did not give special favor to the higher nobility, but drew the twenty-two knights from all ranks, from knights bachelor, bannerets, barons, earls, and dukes.[273] In an Order that fundamentally glorified knighthood, it was anchored to the English king and his interests. Therefore, while it was hierarchical in practice, the Order of the Garter had been conceived to be egalitarian in terms of honor.[274]

Even though the Order was almost certainly conceived as an instrument of policy, as Saul notes, its purpose was to bind together the knights of the realm in common identity *for* a common cause that inevitably translated into the national interest of England.[275] This was not conceptualized from any need to stimulate a certain amount of loyal service and mutual admiration from the martial elite because such sentiment was already present. What it was intended to do was to *secure* such sentiments and institutionalize them in a way that had not been done before.[276]

The Order of the Garter was set to meet annually at Windsor on the Feast of St George (April 23). The first of these was in 1349. In the 1350s, Edward III began to employ large numbers of artists and painters for the innovations at Windsor, even though much of their work did not survive.[277] The Perpendicular style of architecture, which was conceived in the 1330s, had its roots in France, but had become to be called "England's national style."[278] In

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[272] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 129. Boulton mentions Barber's argument in *Knights of the Crown.*
[273] Ibid.
[274] Boulton, 142.
[275] Saul, *Age of Chivalry*, 109.
[276] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 165.
[277] Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, 53.
[278] Saul, *Age of Chivalry*, 15.

1376, a year before Edward's death, the feast consisted of the largest social gathering of the political community since the wedding of Princess Isabella in 1365.[279] Ormrod says that it "represented a conscious effort to revitalize the social and political role of the Garter at a moment when the future of the crown and realm stood in peril."[280]

Like any large-scale tournament, the Order gave more prestige to the status of Windsor as a center of the English political world. It was advantageous for the lords and ladies of the realm to come, as invited, to participate. By 1365, Windsor had become a place of kingly extravagance and national pride. Because the Order of the Garter had its home there, and because it was the birthplace of the king, Edward III made it a splendid palace in the 1350s and 1360s. It was said that a feast was held at Windsor that included Waldemar IV of Denmark and the former mayor of London, Henry Picard. Even if this story cannot be confirmed, Ormrod says it provides "a strong indicator of the close links between the court and the commercial elite of the city," and the general cooperative relationship between Edward III's court and the "London merchants and their wives."[281]

Vale says that Edward III was able to meet and reinforce contemporary expectations by combining personal enthusiasm for and to the chivalric ideal which found its "supreme expression" in the Order.[282] Likewise, Good remarks that while the Order included an exclusive twenty-four members, it "quickly became a sort of national institution, which people were aware and to which all members of the knightly class could aspire."[283] The chapel of St George and the resident clergy there provided the infrastructure necessary for the Order to outlast Edward's lifetime, for what better way to make sure an institution lasts than to tie it to the Church?[284] In a world where chivalry was otherwise decentralized and individualistic, the Order of the Garter created a national chivalry that capitalized on the common chivalric interest of the English nobility.[285]

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[279] Isabella was Edward and Philippa's eldest daughter.

[280] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 548.

[281] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 453. It is easy to see the budding connections between the London merchant class and the royal elite at Windsor. Since Windsor is so near to London, the connections are bound to get closer, and for mutual benefit of king and commons.

[282] Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry,* 93-94.

[283] Good, *The Cult of St George,* 70.

[284] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 305.

[285] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 114.

CHAPTER 5

RHETORIC AND SYMBOLISM:

TRIUMPHALISM AND NATIONAL PRIDE

In July 1346, Froissart recorded a message Edward III had sent to his subjects in England. The message requested that the English people "tender their devout thanks to God for what he has thus made possible, and that they ask God fervently that he may continue to grant the king his favour."[286] In late July, the English army registered its first major victory as a part of the new summer campaign. The sack of Caen, the capital of the duchy of Normandy, was the first of three signifiers that the campaign of 1346 was a national victory for England.[287] Even though Edward did not openly encourage looting and plundering, his army collected a healthy sum of plunder from the city. At Caen, the roles of the Norman Conquest were reversed. William I had set out from Caen and triumphantly invaded England. Three hundred years later, a king of England had successfully invaded Normandy. Employing the sort of rhetoric that sought to encourage those at home in England to have hope in their fellow Englishmen in France conveyed that whether the members of the political community were at home or abroad, they were all players pursuing a common objective.

In this final chapter, I want to examine the use of rhetoric by Edward III and his regime during and after the great triumphs of the Crécy campaign that evoke an aura of national cause and sentiment. Because of their pedigree as spiritual leaders and literate persons, it makes sense that churchmen were often the mouthpieces for Edward III while he was away. By stoking an anti-French sentiment in Parliament and heralding the glories of the English army, the political community shared in the sentiment of triumphalism that was the object of a serious propaganda campaign.

Triumphalist rhetoric was conducive to promoting a sense of national unity and common cause. St George was a symbol connected to English arms since the days of Edward

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[286] C.T. Allmand, *Society at War: The Experience of England and France During the Hundred Years War* (New ed. Warfare in History. Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 1998), 146-7.

[287] The three great moments of the 1346/7 campaign in France were at Caen, Crécy, and Calais.

I's conquest of Wales, but it was during the reign of Edward III that royal devotion to the militaristic saint was brought to the fore.[288] Emerging first as a symbol of English arms, St George came to symbolize the English spirit. He stood as a unifying symbol that transcended the various stations that made up the community of the realm.

National Victory and Triumphalism, 1346-1376

For one to properly examine the official rhetoric of the political community can be complicated because it may often communicate what they wished to be perceived as opposed to what the reality truly was. With this in mind, one can extrapolate what the political elite thought to be effective for furthering their interests. The increasing use of the terms "defense of the realm" and the "recovery of the Crown's rights" are two themes in the wartime rhetoric during Edward III's reign. Most apparent in the wars in France, the rhetoric of a nationalist nature seems to convey that the Crown and political community writ large saw the war against France as a matter that affected the well-being and survival of England.

Once a national affair, it would be a national cause to set out to challenge the kingdom of France. When they had notched their victories against the French, they could then market triumphalist propaganda at home and instill a sense of pride within the psyche of the people. The age of Edward III involved a time when matters of national importance were acted upon out of public interest and were not merely the sole concern of the king and his closest ministers. Instead, a common cause – the wars in France being the readiest example – emerged out of a fusion of political unity and chivalric cultural revival, and preserved by national victory. Here, I want to explore the idea that triumphalism were essential to satisfy and augment the notion of national unity for a common cause.

Harnessing the entire apparatus of the English political community to engage in a full-scale war on France would require more than an appeal to personal profit and glory. The rhetoric employed by the Edwardian regime was meant to show that their actions were conducive to a thriving England. Beginning in 1338, the wool subsidy was marketed as a public issue. As a policy to finance the campaign in France, it was described as "for the defence and safety of our kingdom, the holy church, and the people," along with the pursuit

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[288] Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr, and Myth* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 104.

and recovery of the Crown's rights in France.[289] That the wool subsidy affected the merchants and Londoners more than any other social group in England shows how the Hundred Years War had national implications. The war was marketed as a venture that required the collective support of the political community. The language of "our" from the Treaty Rolls shows an acknowledgement of the inclusivity of the nobility and a subtle parsing of three "branches" of society: the kingdom, the Church, and the people. The idea of specifically mentioning the English church and the people suggests that they are their own interest group while also being a part of the greater fabric of the realm.

Moreover, the explicit use of the term "rights of our Crown" and *not* the "king's rights," shows a consciousness of the war being prosecuted as a matter of public interest, not a private concern of the king's feudal rights. The Crown was beginning to be institutionally recognized as representing not only the king's person but also the office of the king.[290] For the king to wage war over his position as feudal duke of Aquitaine would be a pursuit to recover his personal rights. For the king to wage war against the kingdom of France was articulated as a recovery of the Crown's rights. For example, Henry of Grosmont received a letter in 1338 that ordered him to gather troops "for the defence and safety of our kingdom and our other lands, and the rights of our crown."[291] The way in which the Crown, the higher nobility, and the commons spoke of the war in France as a collective effort, reflected the changing framework of feudalism and the increasing role of Parliament.

However, the employment of the "king's rights" did not completely disappear from official documents. In a hearing of Parliament in 1346, the peers wanted an update on the "recovery of his rights overseas."[292] This was routinely paired with rhetoric stressing the

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[289] *Calendar of Treaty Rolls, 1337-39*; drawn from Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture,* 199-200.

[290] Kantorowicz argues in *The King's Two Bodies* that the Crown comprised the body politic, and was neither the king nor the realm exclusively. While it included both the king and the realm, it transcended both. He dates the origin of this development to the reign of Henry I, but argues that it was during the reign of Henry II (r. 1154-189) when the Crown became distinct from the king's person. Essentially, without the authority of the Crown, the king has no authority over the realm. In a sense, the king is the "guardian of the Crown." When Edward II was deposed, it may be said that he was unworthy as king because he had "contaminated the Crown."

[291] Ruddick, 200.

[292] Ruddick, 201.

"defence of England." The idea that England was *defending* their lands and rights meant that they were the ones were being violated; they were not the antagonizers. Ruddick notes how important this rhetoric was in stoking national sentiment in England. Before Crécy, Edward III sent a message to the home government:

> asking his loyal subjects of England to tender devout thanks to God for what he has thus made possible, and that they ask God fervently that he may continue to grant the king his favour. He has ordered his chancellor to write letters, under his great seal, to the prelates and the clergy of his kingdom of England that they exhort the people to do the same; and the chancellor and other members of the royal council are to inform the people and citizens of London of what has happened, for their comfort.[293]

This example of Edward III finding it necessary to drum up popular support in England is also found in various proclamations the English army distributed as they marched across northern France in 1340. The king attempted to gain popular support from the French people, and said that it was the "prelates, peers, dukes, counts, barons, nobles and commons" and "other of our wise and faithful subjects" who held a proportional degree of political power in England.[294] These two points convey the contemporary reality that not only did Edward III understand who made up the community of the realm, but he believed he was fighting for a national cause. Lavezzo notes that the English victories between 1346-54 and the domestic propaganda show that England's involvement in France was a thoroughly *English* undertaking.[295] During the reign of kings such as Henry II and Richard I, England's involvement in France was constructed as a matter of the king and his barons, not the "nation" itself.

A 1339 document that was read at the Parliament in 1346 seemed to provide moral justification for the English invasion and the crushing defeat of the French only a few weeks prior. The letter supposedly revealed a plot by the king of France "to destroy and ruin the whole English nation and language."[296] The letter played upon the commons' growing feeling

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[293] Froissart, *Chronicles*; Allmand, *Society at War,* 146-7.

[294] Allmand, 148.

[295] Lavezzo, ed. *Imagining a Medieval English Nation,* 307. In reference to Robin Frame in *Ireland and Britain*, 181.

[296] "Edward III: September 1346" in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson (Woodbridge, 2005); drawn from Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture,* 1.

of what Ormrod calls "rampant xenophobia" and anti-Frenchness.[297] Additionally, Murimuth and Avesbury record an event in which Archbishop Stratford exposes a French invasion plan to the public at St Paul's churchyard.[298] The fact that Stratford chose to read the recovered plans of a Franco-Norman invasion of England in front of Londoners means he wished to provoke popular support for Edward III's cause. The war was not happening "over there" in France, but there was concern that the war could come to the very shores of England. Stoking fear and encouraging vigilance in London was a way to make they invested in the cause.

Poems that espoused political and ethnic attacks found their way into the psyche of the English and French between the 1340s and 1360s. One such poem from this time reveals the hatred felt between Englishman and Frenchman. In *Dispute Between the Englishman and the Frenchman*, the Frenchman is noted for his pomposity, arrogance, and effeminacy, while the Englishman is accused of gluttony and drunkenness.[299] After the siege of Calais, English poets played on populist anti-French prejudice, which seemed to be a component of English unity. Again, the French were accused of being emasculated men and perhaps even sodomites.[300] That the lines of attack on the French often carried the same tone of a sort of arrogant, effeminate snob shows that these views were concentrated within the minds of the political community during these decades.

This sort of rhetoric seems to have been prominent in the late 1330s, only to reappear in a more triumphant tone in the mid-late 1340s. Perhaps the best example of a triumphalist tone comes from Laurence Minot's poems.[301] Minot wrote in Middle English around the mid-fourteenth century. He likely originated from a gentry family, and embodies the more "nationalist" nature of the English commons. His war ballads regularly glorify King Edward,

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[297] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 455.

[298] Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, 208-212, 363-367. The plan was presumably discovered by English spies.

[299] Thomas Wright, *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed During the Period from the Accession of Edw. III to That of Ric. III* (Great Britain. Public Record Office. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages.; No. 14. Nendeln]: [Kraus Reprint], 1965), xxiv-xxv, 91-93. The author of the poem is unknown.

[300] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 323.

[301] Not much is known about Minot, but there is speculation that he hailed from northern England and was a soldier in Edward III's army. Only one copy of Minot's poems is known to exist, and they are preserved in the British Museum.

but more importantly, they exalt England as she prevails over her foes. While the historical details of the poems do not add anything unique, the style and tone evince a sentimentality towards England. A man-at-arms is much more likely to take on a more "nationalist" tone because of his closeness to battle. This makes his poetry all the more noteworthy. As Coote says, Minot writes as if he "is seeking to involve himself and his audience in events in which only those who fight can actually take part," which evokes a sense of collective identity for a common cause.[302] Hall notes that unlike preceding English poetry that is usually intended to criticize abuses of the king or express political grievances, Minot is the "first to speak in the name of the English nation just awakened to a consciousness of its unity and strength."[303] It is important, however, to not read too much into Minot. His poetry shows that the idea of national victory reached the country gentry; it was not only under the purview of the higher nobility.

Stories of political prophecy and the mythos of legendary figures all garnered wide circulation in the 1330s and 1340s. *The Last Kings of the English* is an example that promoted a combination of royal and national prophecies and myths that became quickly circulated among the English elite during these decades and beyond.[304] *The Last King of the English* was thought to have been rewritten sometime in the 1330s and built off a tradition of political prophecies that legitimated the Plantagenets as the true heirs of Britain. It derived from the *Prophetiae Merlini,* a work of pseudo-history by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and later added to the popular *Brut* Chronicle in the late fourteenth century. *The Last King of the English* is similar to the *Prophetiae Merlini* because of its anthropomorphic figures: the English kings are represented by animals.[305] Coote argues that the text embodies a "binding of common national interests with royal claims," and that the "ultimate expression of national and royal destiny is attained."[306] Edward III is represented by a boar, and is called the "Boar of

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[302] Lesley Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in Association with Boydell Press, 2000), 25.
[303] Laurence Minot, *The Poems of Laurence Minot*, ed. Joseph Hall (England: Clarendon Press, 1897), xiii.
[304] Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs,* 101.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Coote, 101-11. Coote covers the text in great detail in these pages.

Windsor." The boar is prophesied to recover the lands of his ancestors – referring to the lands lost by John and Henry III – and France, Scotland, and Spain will quiver at the sight of him.[307]

In one way or another, one could say that Edward III fulfilled the prophecy, but he did not come close to fulfilling the final prophecy of fighting all the way to Jerusalem. This text does not necessarily act as propaganda for Edward III as much of a roadmap for his reign and the "destiny" of England. The triumphant tone of *The Last King of the English* is important for understanding the mindset of a king who was already known as an idealistic visionary. I want to emphasize the fact that this political prophecy encapsulates the notion of a national cause by which the English political elite may pursue.[308] It does not function as a sort of hero-worship of Edward III. While he remains a sort of protagonist, picking up the pieces after his hapless father aptly named the "Goat," he is fulfilling the collective destiny of "England." According to the prophecy, it is not a united front of Christian kings of Europe who march on the gates of Jerusalem. It is the English king with an English army. Lastly, like the tone of defensive rhetoric from the *Treaty Rolls* and parliamentary writs, the author of the text makes sure to write as though everything was somewhat possessed by Edward and the English already.

Thomas Bradwardine preached after the victory at Crécy that the English had a special relationship with God and that God was the "patron and advocate of [our] cause."[309] Triumphalist expression largely emerged in the 1350s during architectural patronage of Windsor and Westminster, and the institution of the Order of the Garter. In 1360, Edward agreed to the Treaty of Calais. A stipulation of the treaty was that he remove "king of France" from his title in exchange for holding Aquitaine, Bordeaux, Calais, and Ponthieu in full sovereignty.[310] The Second Treaty of London only a year prior had shown that the English were negotiating from the high ground. They demanded to hold all former Angevin territories in full sovereignty, *and* Edward would refuse to renounce his claim to the French throne. Whether it was reality or destiny, the strong position of the English in 1359 evaporated by

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[307] Coote, 107.

[308] It was written in Middle English after having former versions in Latin and French.

[309] Tiffany Grade, "Warfare, the Royal Image, and National Identity: Succession and Propaganda during the Hundred Years War, 1337–1422," PhD diss., (University of Notre Dame, 2005), 107. Quoting from Offler, 29: patronus et advocatus cause ipsorum.

[310] Gray, *Scalacronica*, 187. John II was released on a ransom of three million in gold which was never paid by the French.

early 1360, when John the Good's heir – Charles V – continued to make inroads in English-held territory in southern France. Edward seems to have folded from the mounting pressure and agreed to a watered-down treaty that also released John II on a heavy ransom that would never fully be paid by the French.

England's position as an international power seems to have only waned after 1356, when it had two kings – David II and John II – in the Tower of London. What I want to note here is how the political fallout of this treaty set the course for the decline of English triumphalism that transmogrified into a desperate, nostalgic longing for a golden past. The Treaty of Calais was deeply unpopular with the English political community. It had grown accustomed to winning great battles, celebrating with great extravagance at tournaments and feasts, and feeling among the most blessed people of God on earth. Ormrod notes that the Treaty of Calais was seen as a disappointment because it was seen within the context of the high expectations that were set from the outside of Edward III's reign.[311] The political community had grown accustomed to saying "no" to the French and defeating them at nearly every turn that the mere thought of a peace treaty for the martially-minded English made their king look weak.

The victories of the 1340s and 1350s and the propaganda of triumphalism kept raising expectations that the Treaty of Calais was deeply disappointing to many in England. At least three writers of the 1360s decried the treaty: John Erghome, Thomas Gray, and William Langland. John Erghome, a friar from York and author of *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington,* believed that Edward III giving up his claims to the throne of France meant that he was also giving up on the rights of the community of the realm.[312] Thomas Gray criticized the treaty as a way of conceding the moral authority that England possessed to conduct war against France and questioned Edward's motives for renouncing the title of "king of

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[311] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 413.

[312] Helen Margaret Peck, "*The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*," PhD diss., (University of Chicago, 1930), 57-60; D. N. Baker, "Meed and the Economics of Chivalry in *Piers Plowman*." in *Inscribing the Hundred Years' War in French and English Cultures,* ed. D. N. Baker (Albany, NY, 2000), 57. Baker notes that because Erghome's text was dedicated to the powerful Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Northampton, he likely indirectly communicated the viewpoint of Humphrey. Erghome writes that England should involve itself once more in France. No doubt, the accumulation of plunder is a primary motive for doing so.

France."[313] Thirdly, during an exchange between two characters in Langland's *Piers Plowman,* Edward III is ridiculed for selling his birthright for "a litel silver."[314]

The sour reaction to the Treaty of Calais at home shows that England was used to success abroad. Saul notes that Edward's push for the French crown was articulated as a common cause because the nobility believed that in upholding his rights to the crown of France, he was upholding their rights as well.[315] The firm sense of national unity and common cause that had emerged during the 1340s and 1350s had begun to fragment in the 1360s when the English failed to achieve any laudable victories, and when Edward III grew old. Those who possessed a voice in Parliament, however, had not relinquished the feeling of success and superiority.

In 1369, the year of Queen Philippa's death, "the lords and commons declared their unanimous support for war and made a generous new grant of the wool subsidy in recognition of the impending state of emergency."[316] Over the 1360s, hostilities resumed shortly after the treaty that was intended to stop further war. By 1369, Edward III and the Black Prince had been frequently ill, and the military campaigns in France were being led by John of Gaunt. Even though the campaigns were fruitless for the English, the political community was still mostly stubborn to the reality of defeat. They wanted to repeat the success of the 1340s and 1350s.

The feeling of English pride became increasingly local. Knights who had fought in the French wars returned to their lands in the country and fostered their own versions of what they had experienced. It began to extend beyond the heroism of Edward III, the Black Prince, and Henry of Grosmont, a sign that the centrality of national unity was dissolving. Caudrey notes "local legends" such as Sir Geoffrey Scrope, Robert, lord Morley, and Sir Hugh

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[313] Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica, The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II, and Edward III,* ed. And trans. Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: J. Maclehose & Sons, 1907), 164-65; Baker, "Meed and the Economics of Chivalry in *Piers Plowman,*" 55-65. Baker explores the contemporary shock and dissatisfaction of the Treaty of Calais. Gray's contention with the treaty seems to be based off the idea that it was struck because Edward, among others, were weary and that they did not see a chance of garnering any more plunder. The fact that the English were weary and facing a stronger French force, to Gray, was no reason to abandon the cause.
[314] William Langland*, The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. J M. Dent and E. P. Dutton (London and New York, 1978), III, l. 207.
[315] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 114.
[316] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 503.

Hastings as members of the gentry whose regional status was heightened because of the identity they shared in a national campaign.[317] William of Wykeham, the powerful bishop of Winchester, called for prayers for the kingdom of England in 1372, lamenting the great suffering that had beset "our whole English people" from their engagements with the French.[318] The wars in France were framed as a collectively-fought campaign. In 1373, city authorities in Bristol produced a royal charter illuminated with the quartered royal arms "and a full-length image of Edward III dressed in the coronation robes as king of France.[319]

The community of the realm refused to give in to the reality that their king and the kingdom were suffering numerous defeats in France. Their honor was not what it used to be when the king and his heir lay sick in bed in the 1370s. Without the leadership of Edward III or the Black Prince, the harmony of the political community got out of tune, a testament to the idea that government was still fundamentally personal. The national unity forged over the course of the 1330s helped produce the victories of the 1340s and 1350s. It created a sense of triumphalist pride that stubbornly lived on into the 1360s, and staggered into the early 1370s. The rampant corruption of the 1370s eclipsed the importance of reconquering the territories in France that had been taken by Charles V. In a sermon in 1375, Thomas Brinton, bishop of Rochester, laments that England's great victories were stained by recent plague, famine, and political corruption:

> God has justly allowed the earth and other elements to be not advantageous but destructive to man their superior, and you tell me how! Secondly, where there is idleness, there is all evil, such as theft, pillage, gluttony, excess, incest and adultery, nor is any nation under heaven as infamous as the English nation...We are not strong and successful in war.[320]

The sense of a national cause ultimately evaporated in 1376 at the Good Parliament. The political community had not relinquished their belief that England had become the New Israel or that the English people possessed a special relationship with God. However, this was a nationalism that was fundamentally different from the sense of common cause that existed

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[317] Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry,* 177.
[318] Grade, "Warfare, the Royal Image, and National Identity," 107-8.
[319] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 523.
[320] Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs,* 16.

between the 1330s and 1350s. There was no longer a political harmony. Chivalric games were becoming more of an elaborate spectacle for nobles to show off their extravagance to one another. And with no more decisive victories abroad, national unity was no longer tenable when there was nothing to spur a warrior-inclined nobility to pursue a cause of national consequence.

St George: Imagery and Symbolism of England

In the 1330s, King Arthur was the paragon and patron of English chivalry. His figure loomed large over every homage to a mythical, heroic past Not only did Arthur offer an illustrious historical narrative for the Plantagenet kings, he justified royal conquest[321] Edward I exploited Arthur's status as a Welshman and his own position as an English king to validate his conquest of Wales. Like his grandfather, Edward III milked the mythos of Arthur, and was captivated by the Arthurian romances. He sought to emulate moments of chivalric romance where he could, be it at a tournament or on the battlefield. The Round Table was the biggest move towards Arthurian chivalry that was to come during the reign of Edward III, but as I have noted, it was abruptly scrapped.

Since 1344, Arthur's position among the pantheon of heroes for Edward III's regime seems to have wane, only to be overshadowed in the 1340s by a figure that was neither a king nor an Englishman. St George was a patron for English arms going back to Edward I.[322] Edward the Confessor and Edmund the Martyr, both royal patrons, did not satisfy the conqueror spirit of Edward I or Edward III. Moreover, King Arthur was fundamentally a secular figure and did not command the sort of spiritual authority that a Christian warrior king desired. Following the Crécy campaign in 1346-7, St George would replace Arthur as the representative of English chivalry. And over the 1350s, 1360s, and on to the end of Edward III's reign, he came to represent more than English chivalry and arms. In a real sense, he exemplified the English spirit.

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[321] Although English kings, including Edward I and Edward III, believed they were re-claiming territory that had already belonged to them or that had been given to them by God: Wales, France, and Scotland are the clearest example.

[322] It is believed that Richard I was the first English king to tie St George to royal culture, but his devotion to the saint was private.

Throughout the Middle Ages, St George was a popular saint throughout Europe.[323] His standing as a Christian saint originated from the story of his martyrdom. During the reign of Emperor Diocletian, all Roman soldiers were commanded to sacrifice to the Roman gods.[324] Shortly after this, in 303, the Praetorian Guard razed the cathedral at Nicomedia and sent out an edict outlawing Christianity. Certain legends tell of a soldier who tore down the edict and destroyed it in the public square.[325] That the soldier in question was St George became a popular myth. George was a Roman officer from Cappadocia who was arrested after presumably tearing down the Temple of Bacchus. He was later tortured and killed on 23 April 303 AD.

Over the next several hundred years, George was mentioned along with other warrior-saints like Nestor, even though the historical facts of his life appear to have been lost or corrupted. Fundamental to the cult of St George was his status as a soldier. He could be seen as a somewhat tragic, yet triumphant figure. Many hagiographies told of brave Christians who had defied commands from pagan foes, but what stood out with George was his rank. He was not a patrician, but he was a high-ranking officer. However he rose to prominence as a martyr, he is often associated with the slaying of a dragon. Riches says that the earliest episode of George distinguishing himself from generic hagiography to a heroic epic is most apparent in the thirteenth-century version of his life called the *Golden Legend*.[326] In this tale, George is more of a character out of a romance. Infamously, a dragon has been threatening to destroy a city in Libya. George, with the help of the princess, brings the dragon – bound by a girdle about his neck – to the city. He says he will slay the dragon if the people convert.[327] When they do, the king offers (depending on the version) George money, land, or his daughter's hand in marriage. George refuses these gifts and leaves the city.[328]

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[323] The cult of St George was popular in Ethiopia, Germany, Portugal, and Armenia.

[324] Riches, *St. George,* 7.

[325] Riches, 8.

[326] Riches, 3.

[327] There are several versions of the tale. Some say he slew the dragon before taking it to the city.

[328] Riches, 4. The fact that he refuses marriage may arise from pre-courtly love chivalry, but it is also from his status as the "Virgin knight." When Edward III attributes the Order of the Garter to Mary, St George, and St Edward the Confessor, what all of them have in common is not just their deep piety, but their chastity and virginity.

It is puzzling why a warrior-saint from Cappadocia in Asia Minor gained such prominence in the kingdom of England. Perhaps because he was a popular warrior-saint, he fit the warrior-spirit Edward I and Edward III typified. Edward the Confessor and Edmund the Martyr, both kings of England and royal patron saints, were known for their piety and steadfastness, not their prowess or triumphalism.

In the 1290s, Edward I's infantry wore armbands of St George's cross, marking the first time an English monarch made official use of St George.[329] He used St George to justify his wars in Wales and Scotland, and as a symbol of the moral authority of his royal ambitions and the superiority of English arms.[330] George's status as a patron of soldiers and chivalry was most prominent during the reign of Edward I, but his status as a patron of England would become apparent during the reign of Edward III.

During the reign of Edward III, St George began to transcend war and peace and became more widely accepted beyond the limitations of knighthood. Thomas of Lancaster, who had risen in rebellion against Edward II, was associated with the coat of arms of St George: a red cross on a white field. As an homage to the popular figure of Thomas, and a clever way to legitimize St George, Edward III tried to convince the pope to canonize Thomas as a martyr.[331] Even though the pope was unconvinced, it showed not only another way that Edward III attempted to heal relations with disaffected nobles, but a peculiar liking for the Georgian imagery associated with Thomas of Lancaster. A manuscript from 1326-7, known as the Milemete treatise, shows St George arming young Edward of Windsor. Another contemporary manuscript, the *Douce Hours*, depicts St George standing beside Thomas of Lancaster.[332] Clearly, St George epitomized the ideal noble as a warrior of virtuous character.

In the 1330s, St George began to take his place among the ranks of the English army as he had during the Welsh and Scottish campaigns of Edward I in the 1290s. Heraldry was a popular way for knights to ostensibly distinguish themselves from other knights. Personal banners, pennants, shields, tunics, and horse trappers convey the essence of chivalry as a

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[329] Good, *The Cult of St George,* 53.
[330] Good, 19.
[331] Riches, *St. George*, 106.
[332] Riches, 104-5.

fundamentally individualistic ethos.[333] That began to change with Edward III. In the early 1330s, he commissioned thirty banners of St George, forty-four that depicted the arms of England, ten of St Edward, and five of St Edmund. By 1333-5, the ratio had changed dramatically. Sixty standards and eight hundred pennants of the arms of St George had been commissioned.[334] The figure of King Arthur still loomed large over English political culture, and St George had been relegated to the battlefield. But the incremental use of St George as a unifying symbol of the English army was necessary for his later evolution into a unifying symbol of the English spirit.[335]

Another way that St George became a symbol for the English spirit was his association with the Order of the Garter and Windsor palace. The existing royal chapel at Windsor – the chapel of Edward the Confessor – was re-founded and dedicated to all three of the patron saints of the Order of the Garter.[336] Alongside the architectural schemes of Edward's regime was the greater attachment of the Garter and St George to martial symbolism. Like the St George pennants, Edward III's personal ship, the *Thomas*, was "decked out" with pennons with garter imagery in 1351.[337] There is no doubt that in propaganda campaign of triumphalism – from 1348 onward – that St George and the Order of the Garter were regularly associated with one another. In 1350, a thousand more pennants of the arms of St George were ordered as England prepared to further involve itself in the Castilian civil war.[338] By the 1350s, the use of St George as a symbol of English arms had far surpassed the use from the late thirteenth century. The saint's notoriety expanded from being confined to illuminated manuscripts and architectural imagery. Even though it was inextricably tied to the exclusive Order of the Garter, Georgian imagery could be noticed

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[333] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 158. These findings originate from printed manuscripts of various accounts of the King's Remembrancer from the Exchequer.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 305.

[337] Ormrod, 308.

[338] Ibid. Edward III had high hopes in placing one of his sons, either Edward or John, on the path to become the king of Castile. The Black Prince had made it a primary objective of his in the 1350s and 1360s. Subsequently, John of Gaunt made a major push to become king of Castile, but ultimately failed.

outside private chapels; St George could be seen as a public representation of the English monarchy.[339]

Unlike the growing use of vernacular English, the imagery of St George began as an exclusive item of the royal court. Instead of St George becoming a symbol of England from a groundswell of popular support, he became to exemplify the English spirit from the aristocratic nature of his patronage. If St George was to become a public figure who represented the national spirit of England, then his association with English chivalry and arms had to be validated. English arms had to be triumphant for St George to become a popular saint. Jonathan Good notes the first known employment of St George as a protector of the English people. He references the words used at the rededication of the chapel at Windsor in 1351 to the "honour of the blessed George, the most invincible athlete of Christ, whose name and protection of the English race invoke as that of their peculiar patron, especially in war."[340] Because St George was fundamentally identified with warfare, it is unsurprising that he became such a popular saint of the English political community.

The poem, *The Vows of the Heron,* was composed around 1338, shortly after Edward III's official claim to the throne of France and the outbreak of the French wars. It refers to the status of St George as a symbol of the kingdom of England. The poet pits the royal patron saint of France, St Denis, against St George. He conveys the idea that Denis and George were symbols of the kingdoms they represented. The poet has King Edward say that he will "defy the king of St Denis," i.e., the king of France. Then, Edward swears, as king, "by St George and St Denis" – the symbols of each kingdom.[341]

It is no surprise then that the figure of St George was associated with the three warrior kings of England: Richard I, Edward I, and Edward III. All three had led successful military campaigns and were popular monarchs. Good points out that, similar to the devotion to King Arthur, strong kings were associated with St George, while weak kings were not.[342] This point extends beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the "bad kings" of the fourteenth century – Edward II and Richard II – did not firmly grasp onto the symbolism of St George or Arthur, and neither were warrior kings. Good later goes on to argue that St George's rising stature in

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[339] Ibid.

[340] *Calendar of Patent Rolls*: *1350-54*, 127; Good, *The Cult of St George,* 72.

[341] Wright, *Political Poems and Songs,* 6-7.

[342] Good, *The Cult of St George,* xv, 62.

public imagery "represented an England that was hierarchical, but inclusive, with everyone having a proper role to play, and his chivalry reflected well on the English, regardless of their actual stations."[343] While he was still reserved primarily to the upper echelons of English society, the degree to which his arms were commissioned for the English army and the rhetoric that was pushed to make him represent the English people, leads to him evolving into a national symbol. Good makes sure to define this as nationalism being "a sense of belonging to a nation coupled with a feeling of partiality towards it."[344] Operating from such a definition, it would be difficult not to suggest that, during the triumphalist stage of Edward III's reign (1347-1359), St George ignited such a feeling of partiality in the English political community.

Their interest in St George as a symbol for a society that had been steered towards martial endeavors is evident in Georgian imagery. As far back as 1338, the constable of Bordeaux – still under English control at this time – paid for fifteen standards, nine of which bore the arms of St George, while the remaining six displayed the split arms of the English and French coat of arms. The king's armorer commissioned three banners and eight hundred pennants of St George in preparation for the Crécy campaign in 1345-46.[345] Thomas of Snetesham, a naval clerk, ordered ninety-five pennants of St George between 1337-47. Even for the great masts of the English ships in the 1340s, flags of St George were displayed.[346] Clearly, St George served as a symbol of the English army, even before they achieved their momentous victories.

Perhaps it can be said that Edward III noticed a connection between the banners of St George on the battlefield and the triumphalism that transpired afterwards. There was a connection between St George and victory, and thus, St George had to be preserved and promoted. Most evidently, this became manifest in his status as the patron of the Order of the Garter and the remodeling of a new chapel of St George at Windsor. That way, the figure of English triumph was monumentalized in the grand architecture and imagery of England and rested at the home of the king.

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[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Pennants were tied to the ends of soldiers' lances.
[346] Good, 62.

From the banners of the soldiers, to the pages of manuscripts, and on the lips of those who pronounced, "For St George!" as they strode into battle, each conveyed the notion that St George was more than the private devotional saint of the royal court or the exclusive property of the chivalric elite. His growing public notoriety fixed his place in national life. The victories of 1346/7 enabled St George's status from royal patron saint to become conventionally understood as the patron saint of England the "nation." While St George never became the rallying cry that he would during the reign of Henry V, he nonetheless emerged out of the atmosphere of national unity and English triumphalism that had formed among the political community during the late 1340s and into the 1350s and 1360s.

CONCLUSION

The final years of Edward III's reign looked similar to his first years as king. Among members of the political community, there was extensive speculation due to their air of uncertainty that surrounded the Crown. The 1370s – much like the 1330s – was a decade when a younger set of nobles were picking up the torch left by their aging or deceased fathers. Political discord was rampant, and Parliament had not met since 1373. As the king's third son, John of Gaunt, became, for all intents and purposes, the *de facto* ruler of the realm, at least two factions formed.[347]

In May 1376, King Edward III called Parliament.[348] At the "Good Parliament" of 1376, Peter de la Mare, a shire knight, was elected speaker of the Commons. His primary objective was to reform a government that had become corrupt in recent years. Much of the blame was laid at the feet of John of Gaunt. An old Edward III resorted to his chambers, due to his declining health.[349] Likewise, the Black Prince had become seriously ill. Thus, the presidency of Parliament went to John.[350] Beyond the issues of taxation subsidies, the Commons railed against the scandals of Edward III's freeloading mistress, Alice Perrers.[351] She had taken an unseemly, influential role at court and accumulated a vast sum of wealth.[352] The final years of Edward III's reign were composed of military defeat, fiscal bankruptcy, and political scandal."[353]

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[347] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 550-560. Ormrod delves into the details of the "Good Parliament," noting that a primary concern of the Commons was the issue of taxation and the greater issues of the Crown's constitutional authority (551). There were two factions that arose: the "royalists" and the "populists." John of Gaunt represented the royalists, and the Black Prince the reform-minded populists.

[348] Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-142,* trans. David Preest (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 25. Walsingham was an English monk and chronicler.

[349] Ormrod, 551.

[350] Ormrod, 552.

[351] Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora*, 26.

[352] Perrers had her start as a servant for Queen Philippa in 1366. After Philippa's death in 1369, Perrers became the king's mistress – although it is believed that their affair began before Philippa's death.

[353] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages,* 46.

During the political instability at the top, the country gentry – around 2300 knights and esquires – had emerged as the most dominant local political force in England.[354] While some were periodically summoned to Parliament, most of their interests remained local because that is where their center of influence was based. Moreover, military failures and political bickering at the national level did not help reaffirm the sense of national unity that had emerged in the 1330s. With a young boy – the Black Prince's son Richard – about to take the throne, and France reconquering much of the territory that was supposed to be settled at the Treaty of Calais (1360), the days of national unity and common cause seemed to have passed.

Contemporary chroniclers and poets such as Walsingham, John Gower, and Geoffrey Chaucer noticed a stark turn away from the chivalric revival heralded by Edward III. Edward and much of the political elite had acted as though war was an instrument of national renewal, and from what they had achieved, not many could critique such a notion.[355] Thomas Walsingham strikes a melancholic chord in *Chronica Maiora*, in which he bemoans the rise of courtly love at the cost of the decline of martial prowess among the knights of Richard II. He claimed that a number of Richard II's chamber knights were "more knights of Venus" and "more valorous in the bedchamber than on the field of battle, defending themselves rather with their tongues than with their spears, being alert in speech, but asleep when martial deeds were required."[356]

The era of chivalric cultural revival was laid to rest once more. Sentiment for chivalric and martial values lived on, but the immediate practicality connected with chivalric activities was growing increasingly anachronistic. Whereas Saul argues that Edward III's style of kingship created a bond between kingship and knighthood, I argue that his reign forged a bond between ruler and realm, uniting royal and national interest.[357] However, political harmony, chivalric culture, and English victory formed a sense of national unity and common cause that began to crumble in the final years of Edward III's reign and was fundamentally deconstructed by his successor. Richard II sought mastery over his nobility. The issues that plagued the 1370s were brought to the fore, and the prior cooperative relationship between the

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[354] Given-Wilson, 83.

[355] Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England*, 112.

[356] Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora,* 248.

[357] Saul argues in *Chivalry in Medieval England* that Edward's policy of outward-looking war was a "prerequisite for good governance and national renewal" (111).

Crown and the Lords and Commons was replaced by a fragile substitute in which the triumphalism of a bygone age was breaking down.[358] Because England did not pursue or achieve national victory in the 1370s and into Richard II's reign, the triumphalism of the 1340s and 1350s only lived on as a nostalgic longing for the past. Richard II ruled in complete contradiction to Edward III's style; his reign resembled much more of Edward II's than his grandfather's.

Richard's successor, Henry IV, shared an enthusiasm for chivalric rituals, but his reign was frustrated by (legitimate) questions over the ethicality of Richard II's deposition, and the civil war provoked by the Percy family. Even though Henry V's reign was short, he built off the successes of Edward III and emulated his style of approaching war as a tool for national unity. Chancellor Beaufort declared in Parliament in 1416 that the victory at Agincourt was simply the "latest in the great sequences of victories" that began with Edward III's naval triumph at Sluys in 1340 on to the utter defeat of the French at the hands of the Black Prince at Poitiers in 1356.[359] The words on Edward III's tomb reflect the esteemed reputation that outlasted his reign:

> Here is the glory of the English, the paragon of past kings,
> The model of future kings, a merciful king, the peace of the peoples,
> Edward the Third, fulfilling the jubilee of his reign.
> The unconquered leopard, he was a powerful Maccabeus in his wars.
> While he lived prosperously, he restored to life his kingdom in probity.
> He ruled mightily in arms; now in heaven may he be a heavenly king.[360]

What I have set out to accomplish in this thesis is to present the historical context of early fourteenth-century England and examine the presence of national unity for a common cause that emerged among the political community during Edward III's reign. I have attempted to demonstrate that a national cause came about as a fusion of political harmony, chivalric cultural revival, and national victory. In the third chapter, I analyzed the critical role that a politics of consensus played in the formative years of Edward III's reign, focusing on

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[358] Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 22. Butterfield argues that this had been in the making ever since the anticlimactic Treaty of Calais in 1360.
[359] Ormrod, *Edward III*, 587.
[360] Ormrod, 583. Translated from Latin.

the forgiving, generous policy of royal patronage, and a cooperative relationship with the commons and merchant community. Fostering a season of general domestic peace in an era of periodic plague and famine served as a launching pad for the political community to accumulate wealth, enjoy the fruits of court culture, and achieve victories abroad.

In France, chivalric adventurism infiltrated the behavior of the English army, and in the wake of their great victories, a propaganda campaign ensued that heralded in an era of triumphalism. Members from all across the community of the realm gathered to celebrate the victories over the French and identify with the newfound superiority of the English spirit. The Order of the Garter served as a way to institutionalize the chivalric credentials of English knights and nationalize the individualistic-ethos of chivalry as a company of knights with equal status in devotion to God, king, and kingdom. I have demonstrated that a spirit of triumphalism and English pride is evident from the political rhetoric, sermons, poetry, and prophecy, and that the strongest example of English triumphalist imagery and symbolism manifested with the emergence of St George as patron saint of English arms – and later, as an incipient representation of the English spirit.

The sense of national unity that stirred the English political community to pursue a common cause is most apparent in the first two decades of the Hundred Years War. While it contributed to the development of national identity and lived on in the English ethos, the factors that created it were no longer what they were in the most illustrious moments of the mid-fourteenth century. A pattern was established in the 1330s. The Crown affirmed its role as a source for status and wealth. Reconciliation and cooperation laid the seeds for a united aristocracy that could be called upon for a national objective. Regional authority of the country gentry and other nobles was too great for them to be interested in only the personal ambitions of the king. They had to believe that it was also in their own regional and personal self-interest to join a war or engage in continental trade.

It was a national cause because the political community believed they each owned a stake in the outcome that translated to more than personal profit or survival, but the proliferation of one's own way of life. It was perfectly fitting in medieval Christendom for England to claim it was specially blessed by God in 1346. The words of Laurence Minot suggest that the English perceived the *natio* as being at once aligned with, and transcendent to, their king. That the triumphalism in the wake of Edward III's great victories would

ultimately be undercut and confronted by the unpleasant reality of the 1360s and 1370s was a testament to the fundamental role that political harmony played in creating an environment that could facilitate the emergence of a national cause. The failed attempts at repeating past victories and paying homage to former glories revealed that the political community of the 1360s and 1370s was not satisfied with the status and direction of the kingdom.

As Edward III was laid to rest in the summer of 1377, many of those who made up the community of the realm were concerned for the future of England. Of those who were alive in 1377, very few had experienced the late 1320s, but it must have felt eerily similar. The kingdom was once again faced with a fractious nobility; a newly-crowned, young king; and strong adversaries making territorial gains in formerly English-held lands. But what had changed was that – more than ever before – the political community could look back and attempt to emulate what they saw as England's golden past that embodied a celebrative atmosphere of spiritual sanctimony and national unity.

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