Lawful Violence: The Relationship between Marriage and Conflict in the Wars of the Roses

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England’s King Edward IV married Elizabeth Woodville in 1464. Edward’s sister Margaret of York married Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1468. Both marriages occurred during England’s fifteenth-century conflict, the Wars of the Roses. And both created conflict between Edward, Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, and France’s King Louis XI. Most historians regard this conflict as either a sign of or product of disorder. I, however, argue that both marriages could have been a calculated form of “lawful” violence known as disworship used to damage the political capital of Warwick and Louis and thereby instigate war with France.

Disworship was the act of damaging a lord’s influence in politics (worship). To regain his worship, the offended lord had to respond by issuing a lawsuit or calling for armed combat. Whoever lost this contest lost his worship permanently, so disworship could be an effective means to oust one’s opponents. Since disworship was often described through emotions such as “hate,” “anger,” or “grief,” I examine chronicles, letters, genealogies, and literary works to show how their emotional language suggests that the marriages disworshipped Warwick and Louis and provoked them to respond with violence. This study nuances conceptions of the Wars of the Roses as a period of disorder by suggesting that some of the conflict could have had a strategy to it. This thesis also allows for a reexamination of medieval marriage strategies that do not conform to typical understandings of marriage as a peace-keeping mechanism.
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Hannah R. Keller
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INTRODUCTION

On July 28, 1468, Margaret of York wed Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy. Margaret was the sister of England’s King Edward IV, and several attendees at the wedding noted their awe at the magnificence of the pageants and banquets. One fifteenth-century chronicler, however, was more concerned with the effects of the marriage. He wrote that Margaret’s marriage was “the real cause of dissension between” Edward and his ally, Richard Neville, the 16th Earl of Warwick, not “the marriage between the king and Queen Elizabeth” in 1464.¹ This is not the commentary a medieval historian would expect to read about an elite marriage in the fifteenth century. This marriage was between two members of the aristocracy. It involved the union of two political bodies. These conditions suggest that the marriage should have been a way to secure an alliance between England and Burgundy. Instead, the chronicler suggests that this marriage led to conflict and that others believed Edward’s marriage four years earlier had produced the same result.

Historians on the Wars of the Roses

For historians of fifteenth-century England, the statement is perhaps not so shocking. Conflict seemed to abound in this century. For roughly thirty years, the English nobility engaged in a war for England’s throne in a conflict commonly called the Wars of the Roses. In 1455, Edward IV’s father, Richard, the 3rd Duke of York, claimed that he was the rightful king of England, not the current king Henry VI. Battles quickly ensued. In 1460, York was killed. His son Edward, however, was able to lead his supporters to victory and was crowned king in 1461.

Three years later, Edward married Elizabeth Woodville. Elizabeth was a widow with two sons, and her husband had fought against Edward and his family in support of Henry VI. These three attributes suggest that Elizabeth was unfit to be queen. Fifteenth-century chroniclers noted that the marriage aroused the anger of Edward’s magnates. And, as the chronicler quoted above suggests, Margaret’s marriage seemed to cause a similar outrage.

Later historians have often concurred with these fifteenth-century interpretations, viewing these two marriages as evidence of the disorder that plagued fifteenth-century England. The nineteenth-century constitutional historian William Stubbs helped perpetuate this narrative. He argued that a handful of “overmighty” English noblemen succeeded in toppling England’s system of “bastard feudalism” in which payment in return for service led to greed. Historians after Stubbs moved away from these arguments that portrayed the conflict as a contest between two competing dynasties over power. The twentieth-century historian K. B. McFarlane was the first to challenge Stubbs’ notion of “overmighty” subjects by examining the intricacies of the English political system. McFarlane promoted a notion of bastard feudalism that rid the term of its negative connotations. He suggested that bastard feudalism was an exchange of service for patronage that created socio-political networks rather than rivalries. This understanding of bastard feudalism portrayed the Wars of the Roses as a product of Henry VI’s failure to uphold order rather than as the consequence of a faulty political structure.

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4 McFarlane, “Bastard Feudalism,” 41.
McFarlane’s views led many later twentieth-century scholars to look at events prior to the conflict to assess whether these noblemen had truly sought power for power’s sake and whether Henry VI’s weak leadership exacerbated these crises. R. L. Storey conducted a study on England’s judicial system in 1966. He argued that the Wars of the Roses were “the outcome of an escalation of private feuds” which arose from “the failure of the crown to administer justice with vigour and obvious impartiality.” So, he believed that the weak personality of the king could have been a cause for fighting. Other historians have examined how the effects of the Hundred Years War also revealed Henry’s weak leadership and could have triggered York’s first protest. The Hundred Years War took place from 1337 to 1453 as the kings of England and France fought for control of the French crown. Ralph A. Griffiths’ 1981 biography of King Henry VI unveiled England’s severe bankruptcy and Henry VI’s failure to exercise strong leadership following this war. A few years later, the historian Michael Jones posited that Richard, the Duke of York, was prompted to stake his claim to the throne after receiving blame for England’s loss of Normandy during the Hundred Years War.

In 1996, John Watts added to Griffiths’ position in his biography of Henry VI by contending that the conflict was York’s effort to save England from its bankruptcy and ineffective king. Watts’ argument portrays the nobles as involved in England’s political affairs because of their desire to uphold the well-being of the country and its people. As the popular historian Dan Jones succinctly summarized, the Wars of the Roses “is the story of a realm that

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descended into civil war despite the efforts of its most powerful figures to avert disaster.” This take on the Wars of the Roses is plausible, yet it presents two issues. First, it suggests that conflict automatically indicates disorder. Second, these historians also treat emotions such as “anger” or “love” as markers of clouded judgment rather than a range of behaviors that could be used to elicit certain responses in other actors.10

This thesis reexamines the marriages of Edward IV and Margaret of York to understand how they could have been used as a form of “lawful” violence known as disworship. I recognize the controversial nature of the terms “lawful” and “violence.” To argue that these marriages did violence to someone is odd, because violence is typically viewed as a physical act. Moreover, scholars today still debate the function of violence in the medieval period. For this thesis, I take violence to mean something that hurts or does damage to someone or something else, whether that violence is physical or more abstract. I also view violence as something that provokes an emotional response. I argue that these marriages were a form of violence, because they damaged the political standing of other lords and elicited strong emotional reactions. In the fifteenth century, this political standing was known as worship. Lords could “disworship” each other by damaging a rival’s worship through slander, catching that lord in scandal, or proving his unworthiness in a fight. I thus regard disworship as a type of violence since it injured lords’ worship.

Responding to disworship was potentially lawful. If a lord did not want to permanently lose his influence at court, then he was required to reclaim his worship. He had two means to do this. He could enact a lawsuit against his opponent and use his words to injure his opponent’s

10 See Chapters 2 and 3 for the historiography on the specific marriages.
worship. Or the lord could fight his opponent and prove his unworthiness on the field. If the
disworshipped lord won the contest, then he had successfully used to violence to prove his
opponent’s dishonesty. Yet if the disworshipper won, then his act of violence was no longer
regarded as unjust. Looking at these marriages through this lens allows historians to analyze
these marriages from a new perspective. I argue that the emotional language in accounts of
Edward IV’s and Margaret of York’s marriages suggests that Edward could have used these
marriages in order to disworship his ally Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, and the French
king Louis XI. This disworship provoked a response from these men and that response allowed
Edward to justify war with France, which he had been preparing for all along. This argument
suggests that there are some parts of the Wars of the Roses that warrant a more nuanced view
than merely attributing them to “disorder.” It also suggests that medieval marriage strategies did
not always center around creating peace.

Methodology

I use a close reading approach, analyzing the language and literary devices in the sources
to uncover instances of either worship or disworship. This methodology is informed by the
works of Barbara Rosenwein, Frederic Cheyette, and Stephen White. In her work Emotional
Communities in the Early Middle Ages, Barbara Rosenwein explored a handful of “emotional
communities,” which she defines as a group “in which people adhere to the same norms of
emotional expression and value—or devalue—the same or related emotions.”11 This argument
underscores the importance of emotions in history, especially during the medieval period. By

She reaffirms this definition in her recent book Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700
using Rosenwein’s understanding of emotions in medieval sources and their importance in medieval society, I am able to demonstrate how worship was something worth gaining and maintaining.

To further unpack this emotional world, I draw inspiration from Frederic Cheyette and Stephen White. Both scholars have researched the importance of understanding emotion and violence in a political context. Cheyette examined the relationship between love and politics in troubadour poetry. He used literature as a source for political culture and argues that troubadour poetry’s depiction of lovers promising fealty to their beloveds reflects language used in oaths of fealty between vassals and lords. He thus interprets the poems as tales of romance and as propaganda that encouraged faithfulness to one’s lord. This framework allows me to analyze the chronicles that portray Edward and Elizabeth’s union as a love match. This framework also sheds light on the significance behind the festivities of Margaret and Charles’ wedding procession and feast which revolved around themes of love and conflict.

I combine this approach of using literary techniques with Stephen White’s view of medieval violence and conflict to articulate how emotions like hatred, anger, and offense belonged to a formula for documenting disworship. White’s work has shown that there were patterns to physical acts of violence in medieval England and France. He conducted a close reading of texts to assess how eleventh-century French monks described acts of lordly violent behavior. He used anthropological understandings of violence as an “artificial construct” to posit that these descriptions reflect eleventh-century French lords’ usage of physical violence to provoke a desired response from their opponents. White’s approach to medieval violence

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suggests that the presence of emotions such as “anger” or “grief” in medieval sources is a good indication that violence took place. By combining White and Cheyette’s methods, I am able to examine how various sources use the language of emotions to show how the marriages disworshipped Warwick and Louis.

Summary of the Chapters and the Sources Used

In the first chapter, I establish the definitions and functions of worship and disworship in fifteenth-century England. This chapter explores a variety of letters, literary texts, laws, and legal cases to demonstrate the importance of worship in fifteenth-century society, its connection to a lord’s political standing, and the grave consequences of losing worship. The Statutes of the Realm include indictments against slander issued by Edward I and Richard II. These statutes provide insight into how slander was used to disworship lords and how this offense was treated in court. The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England (PROME) provide examples of disworship in action and the means to amend it. Thomas Malory’s Morte d’Arthur and William Caxton’s translation of Reynard the Fox are used to supplement the accounts which record actual events, demonstrating the importance of worship and disworship as displayed in literary works. The importance of worship is also explored in The Paston Letters, a collection of letters written between a fifteenth-century gentry family and other members of the English nobility. The Pastons were from East Anglia and have gained much attention from historians, because a vast collection of their letters survived. Although the family corresponded with each other, they also were in contact with some of the key figures in the Wars of the Roses, and one of them, John Paston III, even attended the wedding of Margaret of York and Charles, the Duke of Burgundy. The fifteenth-century poem “The Siege of Rouen” and a letter from Richard, the Duke of York,
to the widow Elizabeth Wodehill are used to show other ways in which worship could be obtained.

The second chapter focuses on Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage. I begin with a brief review of how historians have treated the marriage as a love match. I then use legal records, genealogies, letters, and chronicles to piece together why Edward may have wanted to disfavor the Earl of Warwick and how he used his marriage to carry out this plan. MS Ashmole Rolls 33 housed in the Bodleian Library includes the articles of agreement between Henry VI and Richard, the Duke of York, regarding York’s claim to the throne. The PROME also includes accounts of York’s attainder and his first attack against Henry. York’s letter to the town of Shrewsbury shows his concern for his and England’s worship. These documents establish the background to the York family’s struggle to maintain its standing in the English court.

For Edward’s concern over France, I examine a few genealogical rolls commissioned by him throughout 1461-1469. These genealogies combine visual and written propaganda to promote Edward IV’s rule. Although he commissioned over twenty, for this thesis, I have chosen to concentrate on three of these genealogies. The first is Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201. This manuscript was most likely commissioned in 1461 to celebrate the beginning of Edward IV’s rule. Edward’s efforts to create ties to the English, French, and Castilian thrones provide useful insight into his foreign policy. The second is The University of Pennsylvania, MS Oversize Roll 1066, another genealogy composed around the time of Edward IV’s coronation. The third genealogy is Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 33. This genealogy was created around 1469, the year that the Earl of Warwick rose up against Edward. Although created after the marriages in question, this genealogy shows Edward’s consistent concentration on his family’s worship. An
in-depth discussion of the remaining genealogies can be found in Alison Allan’s “Yorkist Propaganda: Pedigree, Prophecy, and the ‘British History’ in the Reign of Edward IV.”

For accounts of Edward’s marriage, I use a handful of fifteenth-century and early sixteenth-century chronicles. I have elected to use only chronicles contemporary to the time that these marriages took place or those composed by men who lived during the events of the Wars of the Roses. The first of these is commonly referred to as Gregory’s Chronicle, a largely contemporary chronicle to the events of the Wars of the Roses. Historians debate the authorship, yet it seems likely that the London mayor William Gregory wrote the first half while the second half from 1451-1469 was finished by another author. I use Dan Embree and M. Teresa Tavormina’s recent edition of the chronicle, since it amends some of the mistakes found in James Gairdner’s edition from 1876. The second chronicle is known as Warkworth’s Chronicle. The chronicle is believed to have been written by John Warkworth who was a cleric at Peterhouse, Cambridge between 1478 and 1483, although scholars still debate this authorship. I also use Embree and Tavormina’s recent edition of the text. The next chronicle is The Great Chronicle of London, presumably written by the London alderman, Robert Fabyan. Fabyan reached adulthood during the latter half of Edward IV’s reign and was familiar with most of the events. The last of the chronicles is Jean de Wavrin’s Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne. Wavrin was a Burgundian who served both Philip the Good and Charles the Bold. He also met the Earl of Warwick, and so he provides interesting insight into the English court from an outside perspective. A few hunting texts in MS Egerton 1995 in the British Library and Richard de Fournival’s thirteenth-century work the Bestiaire d’amour supplement the

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information in the chronicles by showing the link between love and violence in both a literary and political context.

I am aware that my selection excludes the later chronicles of Dominic Mancini, Polydore Vergil, and Thomas More. All three provide interesting accounts of Edward’s marriage. Yet Mancini was present at the court of Edward’s brother, Richard III, and both Vergil and More composed their histories for Henry VII. So, I have chosen to exclude these three chronicles from the discussion since each man experienced an England different from the one under Edward IV’s reign and wrote for patrons with different agendas.15

Finally, in the third chapter, I explore Margaret’s marriage. This chapter is organized in a similar manner as Chapter 2, although the historiography focuses more on how scholars have viewed the match as an alliance rather than as a way to disfavor Louis XI and Warwick. For Margaret’s marriage, I analyze the narratives of Olivier de la Marche, Jean de Wavrin, and Philippe de Commines. All three lived and wrote in the late fifteenth century and were in service to the Burgundian dukes. De la Marche provides the most extensive account of Margaret’s marriage (spanning 100 pages!). Commines also ended his life in the service of France’s Louis XI, providing both a Burgundian and French perspective. The Second Continuation of the Crowland Chronicle covers the years 1459-1486 and the chronicler, though anonymous, seems to have had deep insight into Yorkist affairs. This chronicler provides an English perspective of the marriage and offers a reason for why the marriage angered Warwick. Margaret and Charles’ papal dispensation is also used to provide a glimpse into the clergy’s involvement in the marriage and what this involvement might reveal about the motivations behind it.

I conclude the study with an examination of another genealogical roll. This final genealogy is British Library, Add. MS 48976. This manuscript is commonly called the “Rous Roll” named after its creator and possible scribe, John Rous. The manuscript was presumably commissioned by Anne Neville, daughter to Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. This source shows the state of the Neville family after Edward IV’s death in 1483. Combined, this wide variety of sources tells the story of the England in which Edward and Margaret lived and paints a picture of how each marriage fit into this society. This study is relevant to scholars of fifteenth-century England, because this argument suggests that some instances of conflict during the Wars of the Roses could have been strategic. The comparative nature of this study is also useful for historians working on other geographic regions. My understanding of these marriages reexamines the notion that medieval elite marriage was always a tool of peace keeping and so prompts historians to reconsider medieval marriages outside of fifteenth-century England that do not conform to expected marriage patterns.
CHAPTER 1: WORSHIP AND DISWORSHIP

Defining Worship

Before analyzing each marriage, it is best to establish what worship meant in a fifteenth-century context and to explain the importance of the concept in shaping relationships among the English nobility. The first step in understanding its importance is to define worship. In his book on political culture in fifteenth-century England, Michael Hicks defines worship as “reputation or standing, how one was regarded by others, and the degree of respect one attracted.” While this definition seems similar to concepts of “honor” or “fama,” the terms differed. Christopher McBride’s study of Thomas Malory’s usage of “honor” and “worship” in the Morte d’Arthur reveals that the concepts had different meanings in fifteenth-century England. McBride argues that honor referred to a person’s individual character and was less a social value. James Titterton provides a similar definition and argues that honor was “an individual’s worth,” which could be and often was recognized by others, although it did not have to be.

Worship, however, had to be recognized by others. Christine Carpenter defines the term as the “worth or credit that was earned by living up to one’s status as a landowner in all publicly visible aspects of life” (sic). Carpenter’s definition reveals that a lord was considered

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worshipful when he proved to others that he could carry out his lordly duties. He showed that he could manage his estate well; his expenditures did not exceed his lifestyle; he knew how to socialize and make connections with those around him. A worshipful lord thus fulfilled what others expected of him.

Because of its public nature, worship seems more akin to fama. Yet Thelma Fenster and Daniel Smail define fama as “the public talk that continually adjusts honor and assigns rank or standing as the individual grows up.” So, fama included both the reputation and how that reputation was formed and disseminated. Moreover, someone could have both good and bad fama among different groups. Worship could not vary. A lord either had worship or did not have worship.

The final difference between these terms lies in the political nature of worship. Edwin D. Craun defines worship as “social worth,” indicating that the term conveyed a lord’s relationship to his community. A lord who had worship had friends and could expect his friends to carry out favors for him. He could expect all of these services, because he was seen as an asset to his community. K.B McFarlane shows that this recognition of worthiness is what allowed the worshipful lord to participate in politics. He states that worship “enabled its possessor to help his friends and grieve his enemies.” The first part of this statement echoes what Carpenter and Craun argue. A lord who had worship had friends, because these friends knew that the lord could be trusted to fulfill his promises. Yet the latter half of McFarlane’s statement reveals that, as

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22 Ruth Lexton, Contested Language in Malory’s Morte Darthur: The Politics of Romance in Fifteenth-Century England (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 88-9. Lexton notes that worship was not a stable quality, though. One could lose worship easily and so one had to continually strive to prove one’s worship.
24 McFarlane, Nobility, 113.
helpful as worship was for a lord and his friends, it could be detrimental to that lord’s enemies. If another lord’s reputation was called into question by this worshipful lord, the former’s chances of success were often slim.25 Thus, in fifteenth-century England, worship signified the political clout that came with a good reputation; it was the influence that a lord was able to exercise. Therefore, worship determined a person’s standing in a social circle and is what allowed him to participate in politics.

Worship makes frequent appearances in the letters from the Paston family. The greetings of these letters alone demonstrate how worship permeated daily life in fifteenth-century England. Each letter typically begins with some formulaic phrasing that revolves around worship. Greetings like “ryth wurchyfull brodyr,” “right reverent and worchipfull Sir,” or “worshypfull and ryght welbelovyd cosyn” establish more than just formality between the author and his or her recipient.26 By calling the recipient worshipful, the author acknowledged that he or she believed that their recipient had fulfilled his or her duty. The greeting thus reaffirmed his or her loyalty to the recipient and the recipient’s place within the community. The use of a formula to acknowledge a person’s worship in the salutation of letters shows that the concept played a significant role in establishing relationships in fifteenth-century English society. Worship had to be acknowledged and so had to be given from one person to another. Such phrases are repeated throughout the letters, demonstrating that these relationships based on worship were created and reinforced daily.

Since worship was relational in nature, marriage provides a good example of how worship could be obtained. In 1451, Richard, the Duke of York, wrote a letter to an English widow named Elizabeth Wodehill encouraging her to accept the marriage proposal of Sir Hugh

25 McFarlane cites the case of Thomas Stonor, a fifteenth-century gentry man from Oxfordshire, Nobility, 114.
John, one of York’s vassals. York notes that to marry Sir Hugh would be to Elizabeth’s “grete wele and worshipe.” Although “wele” speaks to the happiness York believed the marriage would give Elizabeth, his statement that the marriage would give her “worshipe” shows his practical concern. By marrying Hugh, Elizabeth would link herself to the Duke of York as well, expanding her network of loyalties. Moreover, York reminds Elizabeth that he himself owes Hugh “good lordship,” showing that the marriage also would bestow worship on York by allowing him to demonstrate his care for his vassals. Marriage thus shows how worship bound people to each other.

So far, we have focused on worship at the local level as something that was earned by lords who carried out their lordly responsibilities. Worship, however, could be earned in other manners. The fifteenth-century poem, “The Siege of Rouen,” shows how worship could be won on the battlefield. The poem was supposedly written by the eyewitness and English soldier John Page who recounts one of England’s final victories in the Hundred Years War. Although Page’s account conveniently omits England’s later loss of the war, his emphasis on the English soldiers’ worship, particularly that of their leader King Henry V, highlights the importance of the concept at all levels of fifteenth-century society. He writes that Sir William Porter “wanne worschyppe alle wayes,” just as the Earl of Salisbury won “moche worschippe.” Page’s use of the word “wanne” underlines the importance of worship for soldiers. Just as a lord had to earn worship in

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27 York’s letter is quoted in David MacGibbon, Elizabeth Woodville—A Life: The Real Story of the White Queen (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013), 15. The first edition was published in 1938. This letter is particularly interesting because some historians, including MacGibbon and Agnes Strickland, have argued that the name is not “Wodehill” but “Woodville,” suggesting that the woman was in fact Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV’s wife. Agnes Strickland, Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1852), 207-8. Joanna Laynesmith, however, denies this claim in The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship, 1445-1503 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 66.

28 MacGibbon, Elizabeth Woodville, 15.

his community by managing his estate well and tending to his vassals, a soldier had to earn 
worship by proving that he was an asset to the army. To do so, he needed to fight well, defend 
his country, and defeat the enemy. Page’s decision to recount this battle helped to solidify the 
soldiers’ worship by allowing it to be recognized by the people back home in England. But in the 
context of war, worship could also be applied to countries themselves. When describing Henry 
V’s actions, Page notes that by “kep[yng] the Fraynysche men yn fulle sore,” Henry “wan 
worschippe.”30 This line again reinforces the martial prowess of the English soldiers and also 
creates a subtle contrast between England and France. England’s king was able to win worship 
whereas France’s king lost it. So, the poem really presents England and its people as more 
worshipful than France and its people. For a country, this meant that England had proven its 
position as a kingdom within the realm of medieval Europe. The application of worship to 
entities other than people again shows the pervasive nature of the concept in fifteenth-century 
England and also demonstrates the various ways in which worship could be earned.31

Defining Disworship

In Generations of Feeling, Barbara Rosenwein used the Paston family as an example of 
an emotional community and created a table of their emotion words. Strangely, she did not factor 
worship into part of this emotional community even though she included the emotions “love,” 
“angry” or “wrot,” “shame” “gereue” (distress), and “plesyd.”32 These words are connected to 
the concept of worship and more often to its converse—disworship. Since worship could be won,

30 “The Siege of Rouen.”
31 Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, also wrote a letter to Elizabeth Wodehill concerning her possible marriage 
to Sir Hugh John. Warwick stresses the amount of worship that Hugh won when fighting in Jerusalem. MacGibbon, 
Elizabeth Woodville, 17.
32 Rosenwein, Generations of Feeling, 216.
it could also be lost. The loss or lack of *worship* was known as *disworship*.\(^{33}\) A lord could engage in several disworshipful activities. He could lose a battle, mismanage his estate, commit adultery, or, most gravely, commit treason.\(^{34}\) The importance of *disworship* lies in the emotional response it provoked and its ability to bar a lord from participation in politics.

Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* presents an example of the threat posed by *disworship*. The work was published only five years after Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage and only a year after Margaret’s marriage, placing it well within the context of the Wars of the Roses. Malory’s concentration on the effects of *disworship* suggest that the concept held an important place in Malory’s society.\(^{35}\) One of the characters most associated with *disworship* is the knight Lancelot. The Knight of the Cart scene is one that shows how Lancelot’s own actions often threaten to disworship him.

After Lancelot’s lover Queen Guinevere is abducted by the evil prince Meleagant, Lancelot goes in search of her. Yet his anxiousness overrides his judgment, and Lancelot begs a carter to convey him to Meleagant’s castle in the cart. As the carter approaches the castle with Lancelot in tow, one of Guinevere’s ladies-in-waiting spots Lancelot in the cart and remarks, “we suppose he rydyth unto hangynge.”\(^{36}\) The lady’s remark shows how easy it is for a knight to be disworshipped. As she explains, carts are used to transport criminals to their death. The lady-in-waiting thus assumed that Lancelot was a criminal, and she was prepared to treat him

\(^{33}\) Middle English Dictionary (MED), s.v. “disworshipe” (n.) 1a, b, and c accessed May 17, 2021 


\(^{35}\) Jacqueline Stuhmiller states that most scholars agree that Malory had some knowledge of the law and that his readers did, too, “‘Iudi
cium dei, iudicium fortunae’: Trial by Combat in Malory’s ‘Le Morte Darthur’,” *Speculum* 81, no. 2 (April 2006): 432, JSTOR.

accordingly. The lady-in-waiting’s assumption shows the socio-political implications of disworship. Even though Lancelot did not commit a crime, the cart still implicates him. In the minds of people ignorant of the situation, like Guinevere’s lady-in-waiting, Lancelot had lost his worship. Had Guinevere not been there to clarify the situation, Lancelot could have lost his worship permanently and would have lost his place in King Arthur’s court.

But the scene also reveals the emotional impact of disworship. When Lancelot gets out of the cart, he shouts at Meleagant to come out and fight. Guinevere asks him why he is so “amoved,” to which Lancelot responds, “ye oughte to be more wrotther than I.” Both the words “amoved” and “wrotther” are emotion words which show Lancelot’s reaction to his disworship brought about by the cart and Guinevere’s disworship brought about by her kidnapping. This statement suggests that anger was a common response to disworship, as it led to feelings of offense and the need for resolution. The cart scene thus shows the precariousness of worship and the feelings that disworship provoked.

Disworship as Lawful Violence

As Meleagant’s role in the cart scene shows, disworship could also be a verb—one lord could disworship another. Disworshipping lords functioned as a form of violence. Several studies have been conducted on the forms which medieval violence took. The most obvious form of violence is physical violence. In his response to Thomas Bisson’s concept of a “feudal revolution,” Stephen White contested Bisson’s conception of medieval violence as “unpolitical” and instead argued that violence could “serv[e]” multiple means, such as being “a method of

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37 Malory, Morte d’Arthur, 849.27-8, 30.
38 A similar view is espoused in a much earlier text about Lancelot and Guinevere—Chrétien de Troyes’ Lancelot, Knight of the Cart. The cart is a running symbol of shame and complete political ostracization throughout the poem.
expropriation, domination and intimidation,” or “a way of symbolically asserting rights, pressuring enemies to settle by distraining property, recovering rights, and expressing righteous anger and justifiable enmity.”39 White’s understanding of medieval violence suggests that medieval lords sometimes used violence deliberately to restore order.40

Philippa Maddern’s study of social order and violence in East Anglia provided a new perspective on how violence could have helped reinforce the social order in late medieval England. In Violence and Social Order: East Anglia 1422-1442, Maddern questioned notions of violence as an indication of disorder. Her examination of the King’s Bench rolls and files from the gaol delivery sessions in East Anglia reveal that violence was sometimes used in the fifteenth century to maintain order when it was used to enact justice on sinners and enemies of God. Maddern labeled this form of violence as “right” violence.41 Like White, Maddern also reveals that violence was sometimes carried out purposefully.

In the late 1990s, Barbara Rosenwein organized a volume that brought together studies on anger and its place in medieval processes of conflict resolution. In it, Richard Barton shows that anger “served as a warning sign to society, announcing to all that the current situation was unacceptable and that social relationships would have to be restructured.”42 Barton reveals that the expression of anger was an important step in achieving conflict resolution, because it made the offense public knowledge. Gerd Altoff makes a similar argument in his history of ira regis, noting that expressions of anger abound in Merovingian sources in which kings and others

39 Barthélemy and White, “‘Feudal Revolution,’” 206; 212.
40 For examples of how violence was carried out in late medieval France, see Justine Firnhaber-Baker, Violence and the State in Languedoc, 1250-1400 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
41 Philippa Maddern, Violence and Social Order: East Anglia 1422-1442 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 229. She also uses the terms “righteous,” “godly,” “rightful,” and “lawful,” although “right” seems to be her preferred choice, 89.
express anger over acts of treason or other serious crimes.\textsuperscript{43} Paul Hyams also contributed to this volume, yet he offered a more in-depth study on the relationship between emotions and violence in his work \textit{Rancor and Reconciliation}. He argues that the process of conflict resolution in Angevin England relied on “emotionally charged” words such as hatred, anger, envy, love, or fear, because such words served as valid motivations for instigating conflict and/or seeking vengeance.\textsuperscript{44} These studies all reveal that violence was linked to emotions. As we saw in the Knight of the Cart episode, expressions of anger indicated that a lord felt wronged, and so he had to express these emotions to let others know that he wanted to rectify this wrong. Violence thus served as one means of enacting justice in medieval England.

\textit{Disworship} was one form of violence in late medieval England which relied on the expression of emotions. One of the ways we can understand how disworship functioned as lawful violence is by understanding laws against slander, a common way to disworship lords in fifteenth-century England.\textsuperscript{45} One of the first English laws to address slander was the \textit{Scandalum Magnatum} statute which prohibited saying false words against the king or his magnates. The first of these was issued during Edward I’s reign. In 1275, Edward ruled that “from henceforth none be so hardy to tell or publish any false News or Tales” because of “the Damage that hath and may thereof ensue.”\textsuperscript{46} This statement reveals a few insights into how slander was viewed in medieval England. First, it suggests that slander could be a way to enact non-physical violence, because it injured reputations. Second, the phrase “hath and may thereof ensue” suggests that the statute was both a reactive and a preventative measure against slander, because a slandered lord

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\item \textsuperscript{43} Gerd Altoff, \textit{“Ira Regis: A Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger”} in \textit{Anger’s Past}, 59-74.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Paul Hyams, \textit{Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 34; 40.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Hicks, \textit{English Political Culture}, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{46} 3 Edward I c. 34, \textit{Statutes of the Realm}, vol. 1 (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1963), 35.
\end{itemize}
often reacted violently. The statute thus suggests that slander provoked lords to respond with violence.

Although the statute seems to forbid this violent reaction, Edward’s solution that anyone who slanders must be “brought” into “the Court” reveals the paradoxical nature of slander and its function as lawful violence. M. Lindsay Kaplan discusses the nature of slander in her book, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*. Kaplan argues that “slander is not the result of groundless ill-speaking but a true report of one’s own ill-doing” in which someone is either “an innocent victim” or “a deservedly exposed offender.” Kaplan reveals that slander is only slander when the statement is proven to be false. The court setting provides an opportunity for this falsity to be proven. Yet in order for the statement to be proven false, the slandered party must assert that his opponent is the one lying. The irony of the court setting, then, is that the guilty party could be acquitted. If the original slanderer succeeded in convincing his peers of the defendant’s ill repute, then he succeeded in enacting violence against him without incurring any damage to himself—even if he had spoken falsely. So, the *Scandalum Magnatum* did not necessarily prevent slander. Rather, it created a controlled setting for such slander to be expressed and weighed.

Michael Hanrahan applies Kaplan’s ideas to a fourteenth-century context, arguing that it was this dual nature of slander which dictated how lords carried out political contests in Richard II’s court. Hanrahan notes that Richard II updated Edward I’s *Scandalum Magnatum* twice. He argues that these revisions arose in response to the public unrest created by slanderous reports

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against John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster.\textsuperscript{50} Hanrahan notes that it was “[slander’s] ability to oscillate between or even incorporate opposite meanings” which made it a useful political tool, because slandering Gaunt allowed his opponents to damage his \textit{worship}.\textsuperscript{51} Hanrahan then presents the case of John Northampton who was permanently disworshipped when he failed to refute Nicholas Brembe’s slander against him.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, medieval laws that sought to outlaw defamation allowed slander in a legal setting when such malicious language was used as a means of defense or when the malicious language was proven to be true.

\textbf{Responses to Disworship}

These statutes against slander show that \textit{disworship} often provoked a response—that is, injuring a lord’s \textit{worship} was often counteracted with another act of violence, because the disworshipped lord was required to respond if he wanted to regain his \textit{worship}. Now we will examine a few cases of slander in more depth to understand the first method that lords could use to regain \textit{worship}: the court. One example of slander as a way to disworship someone occurs in the parliament proceedings of November 1449. In that year, England’s continual loss of its territories in France led William de la Pole, the 1\textsuperscript{st} Duke of Suffolk, to be accused of treason. During the parliament session that same year, Suffolk protested against the “odious and horrible langage that renneth thorough [the] lande” as well as the “hevyest disclaundre” spoken against him.\textsuperscript{53} Here Suffolk applied the principles of the \textit{Scandalum Magnatum}, because he argued that

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\textsuperscript{50} Michael Hanrahan, “Defamation as Political Contest During the Reign of Richard II,” \textit{Medium Ævum} 72, no. 2 (2003): 261, JSTOR.
\textsuperscript{51} Hanrahan, “Defamation as Political Contest,” 260.
\textsuperscript{52} Hanrahan, “Defamation as Political Contest,” 262-4.
\end{small}
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he was not the true criminal, rather the ones who had fabricated such tales were. This statement shows how these accusations disworshipped Suffolk. The duke suggests that the claims had no basis in truth; therefore, they were intentional attempts to damage his worship. The words “odious” and “horrible” confirm that he had been disworshipped as they infuse Suffolk’s plea with emotion. The rest of his speech reveals how Suffolk tried to turn the tables and disworship his accusers. After the House of Commons presented these charges, Suffolk was called in to answer them. He replied that the charges were “fals and untrue, and in manere impossible,” reiterating the falseness of the claims. But he continued, saying “[the] grete thinges coude not be doon nor brought aboute by hymself alone, onlesse that other persones had doon her parte and be pryvy therto as well as he.”54 This argument does more than just question the reliability of his opponents. This claim damages their worship, because it implicates them in a crime that would result in their loss of political influence. Because the law demanded that Suffolk defend himself, he was given an opportunity to disworship his accusers just as he was disworshipped by them.

Unfortunately for Suffolk, he was declared guilty and exiled.55 Still, his exile was a result of his inability to prove himself innocent of treason, showing how profitable disworshipping Suffolk was for his accusers. Suffolk’s exile cost him his allies and, most importantly, his role in English politics. His accusers thus received the greatest advantage from this case. They received no penalty for questioning Suffolk’s worship, and they succeeded in ousting him from court. Whether or not the charges were true, the accusers succeeded in enacting violence on Suffolk to achieve a desired political outcome. Because disworship often provoked a response, it could lead to political gain.

54 PROME, Nov. 1449, 182.
Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* reveals the advantages and disadvantages of disworshipping a lord. The story of Sir Aggravain and Sir Mordred’s treachery presents a similar case of slander. Malory writes that these two knights “had ever a prevy hate” for both Guinevere and Lancelot.\(^{56}\) This statement again shows the relationship between emotion and disworship. Because Aggravain and Mordred felt anger towards Lancelot and even envy, they were motivated to prove that “Sir Launcelot lyeth dayly and nyghtly by the quene.”\(^ {57}\) This is a serious accusation. Both knights accuse Lancelot and the queen of treason and thus disworship them.

To defend himself and Guinevere, Lancelot kills the knights waiting to catch him and the queen in the act, and then he flees to the protection of his supporters. He worries that Guinevere will be burned as a punishment, so his men tell him: “us semyth hit ys more youre worshyp that ye rescow the quene from thyss peryll,” an action that will result in war.\(^ {58}\) This statement highlights the function of *disworship* as a means of lawful violence. Lancelot’s men know that he must respond to the accusations in order to win back his *worship*. If Lancelot defeats Aggravain and Mordred’s men, then he succeeds in regaining his *worship* by proving the weakness of his opponents. Even though he has actually committed adultery and treason, his better swordsmanship could clear him of guilt. Responding could thus be very advantageous for Lancelot. Still, the outcome could go the other way. If Lancelot is defeated, then Aggravain and Mordred’s original accusation would become truth, and their *disworship* of him would be justified. Because disworshipped lords often responded with violence, the possibility that the disworshipped lord would fail to prove his *worship* meant that *disworship* could be an effective means of ousting political opponents.

\(^{58}\) Malory, *Morte d’Arthur*, 880.22-4
Although Lancelot’s case involves slander, it also shows how lords also could respond to disworship through physical combat. This response is a form of “trial by combat” or “trial by battle.” The basic principle was that a duel was arranged to let God decide the winner.59 Trial by battle appears frequently in literature as a way to entertain readers, but this method of justice occurred less frequently in reality. Still, trial by battle does reveal that this method of responding to violence through more violence was not always the best at proving innocence. Jacqueline Stuhmiller states that throughout the *Morte d’Arthur*, “readers are never allowed to forget” that trial by combat is “a fatally flawed method of justice.”60 Stuhmiller’s assertion is based on the fact that trials were often won by the stronger party, even if such party was guilty. Lancelot proves the truth of this claim by successfully rescuing Guinevere and killing Aggravain. Despite the flaws in the system, it cannot be denied that trial by combat was an expression of violence in the name of justice.

The case of John Lyalton and Robert Norres shows this use of physical violence to regain worship. In 1453, Lyalton accused Norres of high treason. Here again is another instance of an accusation which could cost a man his worship. But unlike Suffolk’s case, Norres did not attempt to defend himself with words other than the fact that he “denied that appeal to be true.”61 Rather than prodding Norres to provide evidence, the court determined that “the said parties should do that battle with certain weapons.”62 Just as Lancelot hopes to prove his innocence through battle,

61 “Trial by Battle in the Court of the Constable” in *English Historical Documents*, ed. A. R. Myers (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1969), 487. George Neilson argues that “in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the battle was still practiced, but it had fallen from its place, and the duel actually fought was rare.” Neilson, however, seems to count only the duels that actually took place and not also those that were threatened. *Trial by Combat* (Glasgow: William Hodge and Company, 1890), 147.
62 “Trial by Battle,” 487.
here Norres could regain his *worship* by showing himself to be the superior swordsman. So, the duel also served as a means for Norres to disworship Lyalton. The author of the account subsequently describes what weapons were and were not permissible, who would attend to each party, and what sort of armor each would wear.\(^{63}\) The detail in the account shows that, although infrequent, this was not the first time such a trial had occurred. There were clear rules in place which regulated how violence could be carried out in the name of justice. This case shows how physical violence was also an appropriate response to *disworship*.

The actions of Richard, the Duke of York, in parliament show another example of how *disworship* could provoke a physical response. In the 1450s, the Duke of York was called to parliament several times to respond to accusations against him. Each time, York made a similar response. During the parliament session of 1453-4, Thomas de Courtenay, the 5th/13th Earl of Devon, was accused of treason. York was rumored to be allied with Devon, and so he came to speak to the parliament to ensure that he was not implicated in such charges.\(^{64}\) York began by explaining why he sought such pardon. He claimed that accusations of his allegiance to Devon “toucheth right nygh [his] worship,” asserting that such accusations disworshipped him.\(^{65}\) The word “toucheth” also suggests that, like Lancelot, York felt emotionally compelled to respond to such accusations. He then proceeded to claim that the accusations were “fals and untrewe,” first attempting to regain *worship* by undermining the integrity of his accusers.\(^{66}\) His second tactic was to assert that he had been a “trewe and humble liegemen,” affirming his own sincerity in contrast to the falsity of his accusers.\(^{67}\) So far, York’s case seems parallel to Suffolk’s. York,

\(^{63}\) “Trial by Battle,” 487.
\(^{64}\) *PROME*, March 1453, 249.
\(^{65}\) *PROME*, March 1453, 249.
\(^{66}\) *PROME*, March 1453, 250.
\(^{67}\) *PROME*, March 1453, 250.
however, recognized that his *worship* also could be regained on the battlefield. While he made the public declaration of his innocence in court, he pledged that he was willing to “put [his] body in devoir ayenst any persone” who disbelieved him or continued to disworship him. The phrase “putten in devoir” typically indicated a person’s taking responsibility for an action, and so in this scenario York was willing to use his physical body as an instrument of violence by engaging in combat and proving his innocence. Fortunately for York, this battle was avoided (at least for the time being). He succeeded in winning the confidence of the spiritual and temporal lords.

York finally took his grievance to the battlefield in 1455 when he and the earls of Warwick and Salisbury made an attack against King Henry VI and Henry’s chief advisor, Edmund Beaufort, the 2nd Duke of Somerset. The case is again recorded in the parliament rolls. The proceedings begin with two of York’s letters explaining his reasons for the attack. In the first letter, he argues that they only instigated “were” (war) because they wanted “to kepe [themselves] oute of the daungier whereunto [their] said enemies have not ceessed to studie, labour and compasse to bryng [them].” This declaration highlights York’s main argument—because he and his supporters had been grieved, he could respond with violence. This logic is shown later in the proceedings when it is revealed that York’s letters “were never openned or declared unto [the king].” This detail highlights the difference between Suffolk’s and York’s appeals. Whereas Suffolk was able to formally bring his case up to the king, York’s case was purported to have never reached the king’s ears. York’s inability to seek the king’s counsel explains his decision to resort to physical violence. To York, gathering together men of war was

68 PROME, March 1453, 250.
70 PROME, July 1455, 281.
71 PROME, July 1455, 281.
not an act of treason but rather a means of defense to reclaim his *worship*, since the claim had not been handled in court. So, while the record states that York and his supporters were pardoned because of their display of “worshipfull and honorable devoir,” the pardon signifies not so much that they committed a crime but that their original innocence was recognized.\textsuperscript{72}

The Duke of York made a similar claim about the lawfulness of his actions in another session of parliament four years later. Although York did not make an appearance in the parliament, he still made his intentions known. York’s accusers claimed that he had thought up “fals and traiterous ymaginations” which went against an oath he had made to Henry VI.\textsuperscript{73} The contents of the oath reveal how York relied on the legal system to defend himself against such an accusation. In the oath, York promised that when he felt “wronged or greved” he would not take action “without [Henry’s] commaundement or licence” or without his own “laufull defence.”\textsuperscript{74} The emotion word “greved” shows that York believed he had been injured and wanted to rectify the situation. Like his earlier case in 1455, York promised to use the court as a means to remedy his grief. But the notion of lawful defense complicates this promise. The phrase both acknowledges the necessity of the court to solve disputes among the nobility yet also suggests that the said lord was not prohibited from enacting justice through his own means, if he felt justice had not been met. York did acknowledge that the king had the right to determine the “interpretation” of what lawfulness was.\textsuperscript{75} Still, this claim reveals that lords were not barred from enacting violence on one another, so long as this violence was a reaction to violence done to them. These examples reveal a new layer to *disworship* as a means of lawful violence. The Duke of Suffolk’s case unveils the role of slander as both a permissible and impermissible means to

\textsuperscript{72} PROME, July 1455, 282.  
\textsuperscript{73} PROME, Nov. 1459, 346.  
\textsuperscript{74} PROME, Nov. 1459, 346.  
\textsuperscript{75} PROME, Nov. 1459, 346.
attack an opponent, and the Duke of York’s repeated accusations of disworship show how the conflict could be settled on the battlefield.

York’s actions in parliament could suggest that disworshipping lords was not always profitable, since he was able to best his opponents. Just as the Morte d’Arthur shows how these real-life cases also were reflected in literature, William Caxton’s 1481 translation of The History of Reynard the Fox from the Flemish presents an example of disworship that leads to the disworshipped lord’s downfall. While several iterations of this text appeared throughout the medieval period, Caxton’s translation seems distinctly fifteenth-century, because of his focus on the fine line between worship and disworship.

The story climaxes with the organized battle between Isegrim the Wolf and Reynard the Fox. Isegrim petitions the king for justice, because he believes that Reynard has “fasley lied” and has sewn “venomous words” against him. This is not the first time Isegrim has brought a suit against Reynard. In chapter II, he accused Reynard of sneaking into his house, taking goods, and ravaging his wife. But this final complaint differs both in the manner of the complaint and in Isegrim’s projected outcome. Unlike the accusation of theft and rape, the accusation of lying explicitly presents Reynard as untrustworthy. Like the Duke of Suffolk, Isegrim tries to prove his innocence by portraying Reynard—not himself—as the slanderer. The need to attack Reynard’s reliability suggests that Isegrim believed Reynard had disworshipped him. Indeed, a few lines later, he argues that he could have endured the other offences, yet this last offense “toucheth [his] worship too nigh.” This sentence is almost identical to the Duke of York’s plea to Parliament in 1453. By labelling Reynard’s actions as disworship, Isegrim asserts that the matter affected both

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77 History of Reynard, 44-5.  
78 History of Reynard, 147.
his social and political station and that it caused an emotional reaction within him. So, Isegrim concludes that he would “ever be disworshipped” if he did not avenge himself. This statement shows that since Reynard has disworshipped Isegrim, Isegrim feels justified in bringing his case to the court.

As shown earlier, Isegrim first seeks to defend his worship by verbally attacking Reynard’s worship. Yet seeing as how Isegrim has failed to prove this claim in his other appeals, he suggests that the “strife” can only end with “body against body,” therefore calling for a battle. This language again mirrors the Duke of York’s plea in the parliament rolls. Isegrim now believes that the only way he can succeed in winning justice for himself is through a physical altercation—disworshipping Reynard through the demonstration of his own superior prowess.

Unfortunately for Isegrim, he does not receive the justice that he so craves. It is ultimately Reynard who wins the worship and defeats Isegrim on the field. Many studies could be conducted on the meaning of justice in this tale, whether Isegrim had the morally right claim, and whether it is better to be a trickster than to live honestly. Yet no matter who the author believes should have won the fight, the story is clear about what the consequences of the fight are. After Reynard wins, a crowd of animals comes to greet and congratulate him for his victory. But the text states that these animals would not have treated Reynard the same “if the Fox had lost the field.” This statement highlights the underlying social and political significance of worship and shows why Isegrim believed he should fight for his. Since Reynard had proven himself to be the mightier lord, he reaffirmed his place in the community. But for Isegrim, “no

79 History of Reynard, 147.
80 History of Reynard, 147.
81 History of Reynard, 157-8.
82 History of Reynard, 157.
man gladly came.\textsuperscript{83} The author thus leads the reader to assume that having lost his \textit{worship}, Isegrim lost his place in the animal kingdom. This passage shows the profitability of \textit{disworship}. Although Reynard has the false claim, he is able to come out the victor. His misdeeds against Isegrim were thus excused.

Both the \textit{Morte d’Arthur} and \textit{Reynard the Fox} show that the literary realm of \textit{disworship} was not too far from \textit{disworship} in the legal setting. As Stephen White states, “whether or not these [fictional] sources ever provide accurate information about the emotions actually experienced or expressed by medieval people” they “encode well-understood conventions” about how emotions were used to settle disputes.\textsuperscript{84} Both prose accounts reflect the scenarios recorded in the parliament rolls. Typical responses to \textit{disworship} were expressions of anger, grief, or offense and the desire to prove your opponent’s falsity through battle or through a court appeal. The literary stories thus accord with the legal records to show the function of \textit{disworship} in fifteenth-century England. Although Caxton’s translation appeared nearly thirty years after York’s dispute, the presence of \textit{disworship} in both the law and literature highlights the importance of the concept in fifteenth-century England and its very real consequences.

Conclusions

This examination of a variety of medieval sources has shown that \textit{worship} was an important aspect of fifteenth-century English society. \textit{Worship} differed from honor and \textit{fama}, because it determined a lord’s ability to participate in politics. Yet if \textit{worship} was important in fifteenth-century England, then so was its converse, \textit{disworship}. The latter meant complete loss

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{History of Reynard}, 158.
\textsuperscript{84} Stephen White, “The Politics of Anger,” in \textit{Anger’s Past}, 139.
of reputability and thus a loss of influence in politics. Expressions of anger, grief, or offense were good indications that a lord had been disworshipped as they show an appropriate response to one’s loss of influence in the community. So, more often than not, loss of worship required the regaining of worship either in court or on the battlefield—violence was returned with violence, disworship returned with disworship.
CHAPTER 2: DISWORSHIP AND EDWARD IV’S MARRIAGE

In Chapter 1, I established the importance of *worship* and *disworship* in fifteenth-century England. This chapter analyzes the marriage of King Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. The couple wed on May 1, 1464. The ceremony took place in secret, and the couple hid the marriage for several months. When Edward finally told his advisors about his choice of bride, all the contemporary chroniclers suggest that most of Edward’s councilors disliked or were even angered by the match. This chapter explores how this negative reaction indicates that the marriage disworshipped Edward’s ally, Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick.

The chapter begins with a discussion of how historians have interpreted the marriage as a love match. This section is followed by a discussion of “love” in its medieval context, particularly its function in belles lettres, and how this context provides a new interpretation of the emotional language found in several chronicle accounts of the marriage. The next section explores Richard, the Duke of York’s, efforts to claim the English throne. I argue that York’s fixation on France suggests that he viewed the English throne as a way to reopen the Hundred Years War and reclaim his lost *worship*. The subsequent section explores similar language in a few genealogies commissioned by Edward IV, York’s son, suggesting that he shared his father’s desire to open war with France. The chapter ends with a discussion of four fifteenth-century chronicles that recount the marriage. I analyze their emotional language to understand how the marriage disworshipped the Earl of Warwick and how this *disworship* helped prevent an Anglo-French alliance.
The Marriage as a Love Match

Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage shocked contemporaries because it seemed opposed to traditional medieval marriage strategies. The English nobility traditionally used marriage to “cement old connexions between families, forge new friendships, or even, on occasion, terminate existing feuds.”

This conception of medieval marriage suggests that marriage was used to form alliances and create peace between two parties. The elite also viewed marriage as the only legitimate mechanism for the succession of heirs and the inheritance of property. A king’s choice of bride was especially important, because his queen affected the kingdom’s relationship with other kingdoms.

The choice of bride for previous kings of England highlights the important function of marriage as a dynastic tool. The need for dynastic unions meant that queens often came from royal families or those of high-ranking nobleman. And almost always, they came from other kingdoms. Katherine of Valois was a “symbol of both military victory and dynastic union,” because her husband Henry V had succeeded in recovering several of England’s lands in France and was subsequently named heir to the French throne. Similarly, Margaret of Anjou’s marriage to Henry VI was “an effort to generate peace” between England and France in the final years of the Hundred Years War. These queens reveal how marriage could be used to create bonds between kingdoms, especially when those countries were at war.

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87 Theresa Earenfight, Queenship in Medieval Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 211.
88 Earenfight, Queenship, 212.
But Elizabeth Woodville was not a princess, and she did not live outside Edward’s kingdom. Edward’s atypical choice of bride baffled his contemporaries and has caused much debate amongst historians. Charles Ross calls the marriage “impulsive” and Edward’s first “political blunder.” Christine Carpenter argues that it was the result of “youthful impetuosity.” Rosemary Horrox states that it was an “error of judgement,” and Michael Hicks calls it “secret and irresponsible.” These statements are based on accounts in contemporary and near-contemporary chronicles which suggest that Edward acted from love. Ross especially pointed to the fifteenth-century chronicle commonly called Gregory’s Chronicle to support this view. He cited the chronicler’s warning about the consequences of love just before recounting the marriage. Since the chronicler also states that the couple married on “the fyrste day of May” and that it “was kepte fulle secretley longe,” he fueled this interpretation of the marriage as a romantic impulse. This view of the marriage as a love match implies that Edward made a poor decision, because the union did not serve dynastic purposes.

This understanding of the marriage leaves little room to see a political advantage to the match. Bertie Wilkinson countered this argument. He believed that the marriage could have been a love match, but he argued that it also could have been Edward’s attempt to infuse the nobility with new members that were loyal to and dependent on him. Wilkinson posited that this new network of loyalties acted as a “counterpoise” to the increasing power of Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, Edward’s right-hand man. By marrying Elizabeth and filling his household

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90 The Continuation of Gregory’s Chronicle in The Contemporary English Chronicles of the Wars of the Roses, ed. Dan Embree and M. Teresa Tavormina (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), 81. May was often associated with the celebration of love, see Laynesmith, Last Medieval Queens, 66.
with Woodvilles, Edward prevented any threat that Warwick’s power posed to his own rule. Wilkinson’s interpretation accounts for the increasing sway that Edward gave to his in-laws in making political decisions. Still, his interpretation of the marriage does not account for the abundant use of emotional words, “love” being the most common, in accounts of the marriage.

Joanna Laynesmith has shown how this language could have had a purpose. She suggests that these romance tropes in the chronicles could reveal how Edward tried to “writ[e] his choice into a discourse of orthodox royal marriage” by having Elizabeth and himself presented as noble lovers. So, even if Edward did marry for love, his love followed accepted literary conventions, thus excusing his actions. Moreover, Laynesmith suggests that Elizabeth and her family succeeded in defining Edward IV’s court as a “centre for chivalry” and later helped bring about the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, suggesting that the marriage had some benefit to it. Laynesmith’s understanding of the sources is plausible, yet she does not consider all the facets of “love” as understood in the Middle Ages.

Medieval Notions of “Love”

In her work *Unmarriages*, Ruth Mazo Karras warns that if we focus on the aspects that led to contemporary marriages—such as monarchs marrying for love—then “we risk falling into a history of what today we call marriage rather than the full variety of pair bonds.” Karras demonstrates throughout the book that different kinds of pair bonds existed between men and

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93 Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 190.
women in the Middle Ages, some of which conform to previous historians’ notions of medieval marriage, but others which deviate from them. Elisabeth van Houts has shown that medieval marriages were not entirely devoid of emotions, and so it is likely that Edward and Elizabeth were attracted to each other. Van Houts also examines cases in which couples, or the women themselves, circumvented accepted marriage norms to carry out their own unions.⁹⁵ Both Karras’ and van Houts’ works open up the opportunity to reexamine Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage through a new lens. Rather than treat “love” solely as an indication of romantic attraction, it is helpful to question whether this language of love also could refer to the relationship between Edward and the Earl of Warwick.

Barbara Rosenwein has shown that emotions in the medieval period often came in “sequence,” and these sequences signified different feelings. As an example, she notes that anger followed by guilt is different from anger followed by euphoria.⁹⁶ Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage followed a sequence of love then anger or displeasure. This combination is often found in troubadour poetry. Frederic Cheyette’s analysis of twelfth-century troubadour poetry shows that the troubadours’ use of “love” mirrored the words used in marriage contracts and oaths of fealty. But when this love was broken, feelings of “rancura” (anger) ensued.⁹⁷ So, Cheyette argues that the troubadours’ conception of “love” dealt with politics as much as romance, because their poems reflected the relationship between medieval lords and vassals.⁹⁸ Cheyette’s work highlights a literary tradition of “love” as both a romantic and political emotion that was connected to “anger.”

⁹⁵ Elisabeth van Houts, Married Life in the Middle Ages, 900-1300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
⁹⁶ Rosenwein, Generations of Feeling, 8.
⁹⁷ Cheyette, Ermengard of Narbonne, 245.
⁹⁸ Cheyette, Ermengard of Narbonne, 245.
Another example of this literary tradition is found in the thirteenth-century allegorical work the *Bestiaire d’amour*, composed by the French clergyman and trouvère Richard de Fournival. The work combines metaphysical philosophy with the courtly love tradition within the structure of a medieval bestiary. This mélange reveals the triangular relationship among a personified Love, Fournival, and his beloved. This work shows a conception of “love” as a force that is used to break bonds rather than form them. The breaking of “love” in this work causes grief and again evokes the relationship between lords and vassals.

From the outset, Fournival presents his work as a study of conflict, calling it an *ariereban*, or a call to arms. Jeanette Beer argues that Fournival’s usage of Aristotelian metaphysics serves to counterbalance the “profane love” glorified in romances; she thus interprets the title as a “war on love.” Yet since the title is *Li arriere bans d’amor*—the call to arms of love—it is likely that the *ariereban* also reflects Fournival’s view of love as a violent emotion that enacts a call to arms against him. This call to arms is most clearly seen in Fournival’s passage about the unicorn. He describes the unicorn’s fate thusly:

> quant [li unicorne] en sent une au flair, il s’agenoille devant [la puchele] et s’i humelie douchement aussi con pour servir. Si que li sage veneur, qui se nature sevent, metent une puchele en son trespas; et il se couche en son giron…et lors viennent li veneur, qui en veillant ne l’osent atendre, si l’ochient.

When [the unicorn] smells a scent, it kneels before [the virgin] and gently humbles itself as if to serve. Thus, the wise hunters who know its nature place a virgin in its path, and it sleeps on her lap…and then the hunters, who do not dare to attack it while awake, come and kill it.  

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These few lines introduce the three main characters in the unicorn story and describe each character’s role. The unicorn is the one lured to sleep, the virgin does the luring, and the hunters do the killing. In traditional understandings of the unicorn hunt, Christ represents the unicorn, because he became vulnerable to the temptations of the world when he took on humanity in his mother Mary’s womb. Yet since Fournival’s story centers around “love,” he uses the allegory to explain his own turbulent love life. As Fournival writes, “s’est Amours vengié de moi” (“Love avenges herself on me”) designating Love as the huntress and himself as the unicorn.101 Since Love is the huntress and Fournival is the one hunted, his beloved is the virgin who lures him to sleep. He explains later in the passage that he grieves because he has “laissie” his “volenté” (“abandoned his will”) in order to serve his beloved, yet she does not love him in return.102 This line completes Fournival’s allegorical tale: like the unicorn, he is pursued by a hunter (Love) who uses a virgin (his beloved) to wound him.

Although the passage seems to describe a purely romantic attraction, Fournival’s language also has political connotations. The dominant reading of the line “a cui doucheur je me sui endormis” is that Fournival describes himself as the unicorn falling asleep at the maiden’s sweetness, her “doucheur.”103 However, a variant reading of this line appears in Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308: “a cui dolour je me suis andormis” (“to which grief I fell asleep”).104 This variant reading adds ambiguity to the meaning of the text. The word “dolour” is an emotional word used in the language of disputes and feuds, and it was a common emotion felt by a victim of violence or vengeance.105 Another instance of political language occurs in the word “s’agenoille” which

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101 Fournival, *Bestiaire*, 204.
102 Fournival, *Bestiaire*, 204.
103 Fournival, *Bestiaire*, 204.
104 Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308 (online), f. 94v.
creates a clear mental image of someone kneeling. Beer notes that this image marks a difference from the sexual connotations in some bestiaries that describe the unicorn as bending its legs and the maiden opening her lap. She surmises that since Fournival himself is the unicorn, it would have been scandalous to picture a clergyman in this position. But “agenoille” is also a political gesture that often accompanied the act of paying homage to lords. This image of kneeling could suggest that Fournival imagined himself as a vassal who had pledged fealty to his beloved and that this bond was broken when the virgin (the lord) became Love’s ally in failing to reciprocate Fournival’s feelings.

This mental image is reinforced by the iconography of the unicorn hunt which appears in manuscripts of the Bestiaire d’amour. In traditional bestiaries, artists depict the scene of the unicorn resting its head on a maiden’s lap with the sneaky hunter piercing the unicorn from behind. This same image is used in Fournival’s manuscripts. The visual depiction of the unicorn kneeling recalls the visual cue of the vassal paying homage to his lord, reinforcing the political connotations embedded in Fournival’s language. Consequently, the image highlights the tragedy of the scene. Seeing all three characters inhabit the same physical space reveals that the unicorn is being betrayed by the virgin as he is paying homage to her. So, the image emphasizes the virgin’s perfidy and reinforces Fournival’s argument that love is a destructive emotion that severs the bond between two parties.

106 Beer, Beasts of Love, 61.
These political implications are important, because Fournival notes that Love does not hunt without a purpose. By describing Love’s actions as a means of vengeance, Fournival implies that Love had a specific motive. He states that Love sought vengeance because Fournival was “li plus orgueilleus hom vers Amours” (“the most prideful man towards Love”). This line reveals that Love wanted to enact vengeance on Fournival for spurning her power in believing himself incapable of falling in love. Love humbled Fournival by making him fall in love with a woman who did not return his affections. So, Love had a purpose and succeeded in achieving this purpose by fracturing a bond between two people. The political undertones of this interpretation and its focus on the virgin’s treachery suggest that Fournival’s work, while likely warning against betrayal, also draws from experience of encounters with lords who used love to sever the bond between two parties and achieve a goal. Therefore, in the medieval world, when “love” was coupled with emotions such as “anger” or “grief,” it could be linked to violence. Indeed, “anger” and “grief” are two emotions that accompanied disworship.

The Duke of York’s Rhetoric of Worship and Disworship

Fournival’s conception of love as a force that separates allies allows for a reinterpretation of fifteenth-century chroniclers’ depiction of Edward’s marriage to Elizabeth which focus on the conflict it caused. The political connotations imbued in Fournival’s text suggest that the chroniclers also could have envisioned love as breaking the bond between Edward and the Earl of Warwick. How might such an interpretation proceed? Historians who rely on the love-match theory to explain the marriage also argue that, before 1465, Edward had no obvious reason for

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109 Fournival, Bestiaire, 204.
110 The irony of this passage is that the bond was broken before ever being fully formed.
wanting to distance himself from Warwick.\textsuperscript{111} Yet language used by Edward IV and his father, Richard, the Duke of York, suggests otherwise; in particular, the language York used to justify his claim to the throne and that used in several genealogies commissioned by Edward. Their similar rhetoric reveals Edward continuing his father’s efforts to claim both the English and French thrones in order to regain his family’s \textit{worship}. Since Warwick actively sought an Anglo-French alliance, he impeded this desire.

We have already seen how York’s protests in parliament demonstrate his efforts to regain his \textit{worship} after various instances of slander against him. These cases eventually culminated in York’s bid for the throne as he was further alienated from the court. An examination of the rhetoric that York used to make this bid shows an emphasis on England’s loss in the Hundred Years War. Christine Carpenter argues that York’s “harping on the loss of France” should be seen as part of a “populist” strategy.\textsuperscript{112} She suggests that France was a tent for a wider range of issues plaguing England which York believed he could rectify. While she notes that this move gave him an air of “self-importance,” she views York’s strategy as an effort to unify England by presenting himself as a capable leader in a time when its king was unable to fulfill this role.\textsuperscript{113} John Watts adopts a similar view of York’s protests in his biography of Henry VI. He argues that York strove to uphold the common weal and could only do so with the crown.\textsuperscript{114} This interpretation of York’s efforts presents him more favorably than nineteenth-century notions of York desperately clawing for power. This view also treats York’s fashioning of himself as

\textsuperscript{111} Christine Carpenter notes that Warwick was still receiving favors in 1469, suggesting that the two were not entirely enemies. She presents 1467 as the earliest date for when a serious “breach” could have occurred. In 1467, Warwick’s brother was suddenly demoted from the chancellorship. \textit{Wars of the Roses}, 172. Rosemary Horrox notes that Edward’s marriage “signaled a turning-point in Edward’s relationship” with Warwick, although she does not suggest that this change was Edward’s intention. “Yorkist and Tudor England,” 479.

\textsuperscript{112} Carpenter, \textit{Wars of the Roses}, 118.

\textsuperscript{113} Carpenter, \textit{Wars of the Roses}, 118.

\textsuperscript{114} Watts, \textit{Henry VI}, 45.
rightful ruler of France as a purely rhetorical strategy. But it is likely that York adopted this identity because he believed he had incurred disworship through the loss of France and believed he needed war with France to regain his worship.

By 1453, England had lost the Hundred Years War. Although the country had at one time held several territories in France, it now had nothing left but the port-city of Calais. A defeat this great created the need for someone to blame. Most pointed fingers at Edmund Beaufort, the Duke of Somerset, who had replaced York as lieutenant-general in France.115 But York also received some blame. He had been captain of Rouen, and so although he was not present when the town fell in 1449, Somerset’s dishonorable actions in surrendering so easily meant that York shared the blame.116 Consequently, York tried everything in his power to direct the blame toward Somerset.

While York’s efforts to condemn Somerset may seem overzealous, York had faced challenges to his leadership before. In 1446, the bishop Adam Moleyns argued that York had not “gouverned the fynaunces of France and Normandie sowele” which was the “cause of the losse and destruccion of Normandie.”117 Michael Jones has explored the connection between these accusations and York’s bid for the throne. He focuses on the increasing tension between York and Somerset and posits that claims of financial mismanagement further isolated York from court, sparked his animosity for Somerset, and eventually led to the first battle in the Wars of the Roses. Since Jones presents York’s protests as a result of the feud between him and Somerset, he suggests that York’s initial protests were not dynastic in nature—that is, York had not feared

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Somerset because he believed Somerset would kick him out of the line of succession. Rather, York needed Somerset out of the picture to regain his good name.118

Jones’ interpretation of the conflict sheds light on the importance of Normandy in shaping others’ attitudes towards York and York’s perceptions of himself. Jones believes that York’s desire for the throne lay in his need to try Somerset for treason. He also does not view the accusations against York as attacks on his worship. In doing so, Jones neglects to consider whether York’s actions indicate that he may have wanted to reignite war with France in hopes of regaining his worship there. York’s first line of defense against Moleyns’ accusations was that he was “greved” and that his “worship” had been “hurte.”119 With this claim, York clearly believes he had been disworshipped. The framing of Moleyns’ attack in this way suggests that York feared the claim would ostracize him from the court and thus strip him of loyalty and influence. To prevent this from happening, York could enact lawful violence. As his numerous protests in parliament reveal, York first tried to settle the issue in the court. Yet as questions to York’s worship continued to pop up throughout the 1440s and 50s, it seems that York began to view this path as an ineffective means of regaining his worship.

The duke voices these thoughts in a letter written in 1452, a few years after the loss of Normandy. York addressed the letter to the aldermen of Shrewsbury from whom York hoped to gain support in his bid to oust the Duke of Somerset. He began the letter by describing “what laud, what worship, honour, and manhood was ascribed of all nations unto the people of this realm” while England still held “Lordship in the realm of France, and the Duchy of Normandy.”120 Because York notes that England had worship when it possessed Normandy, he

118 Jones, “Somerset,” 305-7; 289.
implies that England lost *worship* when it lost Normandy. As Michael Jones argues, the primary purpose of Richard’s rhetoric was to implicate Somerset in this grave loss and so justify his removal from court. Yet like York’s defense against Adam Moleyns’ comments, the rhetoric here also implies that England could only salvage its *worship* through continuing war with France, staving off the French’s victories in other lands, and perhaps even winning back the lands that had been lost. According to York, England’s loss of Normandy demanded more violence.

Again, this rationale may, as Christine Carpenter argues, be a ploy to present York as England’s savior. Yet in the remainder of the letter, York creates a parallel between himself and his country that reveals the relationship between York’s *worship* and England’s *worship*. York states that “villany” is “reported…namely to the Duke of Somerset,” because he “had the commandance and charge” of Normandy when it was lost.\(^1\)\(^2\) This statement disworships Somerset. York overlooked his own role as captain of Rouen to emphasize Somerset’s failed leadership in Normandy. Ironically, though, this statement also reveals York’s fear that the loss of Normandy resulted in his own disworship. York later notes that he “perceive[ed] this inconvenience” and so “advised” the king to take another course of action. But this plan was thwarted “through the envy, malice, and untruth of the said Duke of Somerset.”\(^1\)\(^2\) Here York creates a parallel between his own *worship* and his country’s loss of *worship*. He suggests that the loss of Normandy was not his fault and that any arguments otherwise were all part of Somerset’s machinations against him. The need to absolve himself from blame reveals that York knew he could be blamed for this loss and incur his own disworship.

\(^1\)\(^2\) *Original Letters*, 11.
\(^1\)\(^2\) *Original Letters*, 12.
This parallel explains why York presents himself as England’s savior. While he could have genuinely believed that England needed saving, his own worship needed saving, too. York’s bid for the crown could settle both issues. Being king would give York a chance to prove his worship—if he could lead well, then any claims that he had been a poor governor in Normandy would be disproven. And as the letter shows, York implied that England needed to be saved through war. If he could lead England to victory over France, both he and his country could regain their worship.

Bodleian Library MS Ashmole Rolls 33 shows York’s fixation on France as a site for winning worship. In 1460, York entered parliament with a document explaining his claim to the English throne. In response to this action, parliament created the Act of Accord that established the new line of succession. The accord stipulated that after Henry VI died, York and his heirs would succeed to the throne. MS Ashmole Rolls 33 includes a version of the accord. While the agreement seems to be a document about English succession, it reveals how England’s conception of kingship would allow York to regain his worship through France. First, the accord focuses on England’s acquisition of the French crown. It begins by recounting the line of England’s kings, starting with Henry III. Henry is labeled “kynge of England” whereas his great grandson Edward III is titled “kynge of England and of Fraunce.” The change in titles shows that there was a time when being king of England was separate from being king of France. Edward III’s rule had changed this, however, when he instigated the Hundred Years War. The fact that the Act of Accord granted the English kings lordship over France even after their loss of the Hundred Years War reveals the persistence in belief that the two crowns were linked together. This connection would give York license to invade France if he felt his lordship there

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123 Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole Rolls 33, membrane 1.
had been threatened, or it would allow him to regain the lands which he believed belonged to himself.

Second, the accord presents York as a capable, and thus worshipful, king. The document notes that “the seide duc and his heyres shal immediately succede [Henry] in the seide crownes.”\(^{124}\) This line references York’s two eldest sons Edward and Edmund and shows that York already had heirs lined up. The phrasing is similar to the description of Edward III whose five sons are listed in the accord.\(^{125}\) The birth of two sons proved that York had fulfilled his lordly duties by securing the line of succession. York was thus a safe option as Henry’s heir, because he had two adult sons lined up, eliminating the threat of another regency. Moreover, “crownes” is plural, reinforcing the fact that York and his sons would inherit both England and France. Notably, both Edward and Edmund were born in Rouen during York’s captaincy there.\(^{126}\) So, the repetition of York and his heirs could link the fulfillment of York’s lordly duties to his captaincy in Rouen. While some believed the loss of Rouen had been a sign of York’s ineptness, that city is where York best proved his *worship* by fathering two sons. York is thus presented as a suitable heir both because of his blood claim and because of the implied promise that he will rule well. In this sense, kingship would allow York to prove his *worship* because of the connection between the English and French thrones. Therefore, the evidence suggests that York needed the English crown as a way to get back into France.

\(^{124}\) Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole Rolls 33, membrane 1. The “crownes” appears to have been left out as the scribe copied the document. But it looks as if the same scribe caught his mistake and inserted the missing line above.

\(^{125}\) Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole Rolls 33, membrane 1.

\(^{126}\) Ross, *Edward IV*, 3; 7.
Edward IV’s Rhetoric of Worship and Disworship

The Duke of York’s attempts to gain England’s throne became a reality when his son, Edward, became King Edward IV in 1461. Yet if York’s efforts to gain the English throne were also connected to a desire for France, then it is not unreasonable to ask whether his son adopted this desire. A series of genealogies commissioned by Edward during the first half of his reign (1461-1470) suggest that reconquering France was part of Edward’s political agenda. The first of these genealogies is Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201. The manuscript was most likely commissioned shortly after Edward’s coronation in 1461. While the roll combines visual and written propaganda to strengthen Edward’s claim to the English throne, these cues also assert his claim to the French and Castilian thrones.127

Sara Torres has studied the connection between the English and Castilian thrones and the implications this held for English kingship. She argues that the roll reveals how “the tenuousness of Edward IV’s claim to one kingdom led to his use of the political symbolism of multiple crowns,” suggesting that Edward needed to use foreign kingdoms to bolster his claim to the English throne.128 Torres’ argument implies that Edward only used these kingdoms to bolster his claim to England. The manuscript, however, suggests otherwise.

Edward IV’s box is decorated with interlaced lines of yellow, blue, red, and green whereas the box of the other claimant, Henry VI, is outlined only with a yellow line.129 The

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128 Sara Torres, “Marvelous Generations: Lancastrian Genealogies and Translation in Late Medieval and Early Modern England and Iberia” (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, ProQuest Dissertation and Theses, 2014), 22. Torres’ dissertation focuses more on Anglo-Iberian relations during this time. For the purposes of this thesis, I will only focus on the Anglo-French connection.
129 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
yellow line represents the Saxon kings, the blue the kings of France, red the kings of Castile, and green the Welsh kings. Henry’s box shows that he could claim only Saxon descent whereas Edward could claim descent from four kings (see Figures 1 and 2). So, rather than deemphasize Henry’s claim to England’s throne, these visuals overemphasize his claim. By outlining Henry’s name in yellow, the roll acknowledges Henry’s descent from the English kings all the way back to Alfred the Great. This presentation suggests that England is the only claim that Henry had to any throne.

Figure 1. Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201, membrane 9, Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department

Figure 2. Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201, membrane 9, Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department

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130 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 7.
Torres argues that “in the eyes of early Yorkist propagandists, insular legitimacy is inextricably linked to connections to realms outside,” and so Edward needed to bar Henry from succession to any other throne, because a true king of England was also king of France and Castile.\(^{131}\) The connection between England and outside kingdoms could be political rhetoric merely used to bolster the legitimacy of English kings. Still, this notion recalls the language used in the 1460 Act of Accord that gave York rulership over England and France. So, what if Edward IV, like his father, emphasized this French connection because he viewed France as a site for winning \textit{worship}?\(^{\text{132}}\)

Notably, a scroll drawn at the bottom of the final membrane includes rhetoric that parallels the rhetoric used in the Act of Accord between the Duke of York and Henry VI. The scroll is attached to the banner of the kings of England and France which is held by a white hart, and there is a text written inside the scroll. The text begins by showing preference to the eldest born heir.\(^{\text{132}}\) After this text, the scribe quotes a passage from St. Bridget of Sweden’s \textit{Liber Celestis}. Bridget wrote this text around 1346 after the Battle of Crécy and urged reconciliation between the French king Philip VI and the English king Edward III. Bridget Morris notes that the saint was “legally” on Edward III’s side, because Bridget argues that the “\emph{verus heres consurgat aut ex paterna successione aut ex materna}” (“the true heir springs from either the paternal or the maternal lineage”).\(^{\text{133}}\) This remark concludes the text in the scroll. While this line could be referring to Edward IV’s claim to the throne of England through the female line of Anne

\(^{131}\) Torres, “Marvelous Generations,” 5.

\(^{132}\) Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 10, “Et quod Regnum Anglie…alienatur de fratre seniori vero heredi et datur et accumelatur fratris iunioris non heredi contra iustitiam.” Translation: “And that the kingdom of England… was taken away from the older brother, the true heir, and given and added to the younger brother, not the heir, against the law.” This text is also included in Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 27, another genealogy of Edward IV, except “\textit{vel Francie}” is added after “\textit{Regnum Anglie}” in the first line. See Roger Ellis, “‘Flores ad Frabricandam…Coronam’: An Investigation into the Uses of the Revelations of St. Bridget of Sweden in Fifteenth-Century England,” \textit{Medium Ævum} 51, no. 2 (1982): 173, JSTOR.

\(^{133}\) Bridget Morris, \textit{St. Birgitta of Sweden} (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 81.
Mortimer, it is also likely that Edward used the same logic as Bridget of Sweden to argue that he held his claim to the French throne through Isabella of France.

The emphasis on Edward III’s claim to both the English and French thrones is important, because a similar claim appears in the 1460 Act of Accord. Edward III begat seven sons, five of whom survived into adulthood. MS Lewis E 201 visually divides these sons into two camps. Edward III’s box is outlined in blue and yellow alternating lines. Descending below his box are his seven sons. The first three sons Edward, William, and Lionel appear on the left-hand side of the horizontal line yet are separated from the other brothers by an intersecting perpendicular white line as shown in Figure 3:

![Figure 3](image)

*Figure 3.* Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201, membrane 9. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department

The white line belongs to Elizabeth de Burgh, the Countess of Ulster, Lionel’s wife. Although the white line of Ulster connects the spouses, it also acts as a visual divider between Edward III’s sons. On the left-hand side, the words “ista linea est de recta linea consanguinitatis quo ad successionem coronarum Anglie et Francie” appear (“this line of descent is from the lawful line of consanguinity with respect to the succession of the crowns of England and France”).\(^{134}\) The text on the righthand side with the sons John and Edmund reads: “ista linea clausa et ingrata est linea cotaturalis in iure succendi quo ad coronarum anglie et Francie” (“this

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\(^{134}\) Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
closed and rebel line of descent is the collateral line in the right of succession with respect to the crowns of England and France”). The branch is thus divided by the “recta” or “lawful” line and the “clausa” or “closed” line. These statements parallel the claims in the Act of Accord which states that “the ryht title dignite roiall and estate of the crownes of Englond and of Fraunce…belongith” to “leonell the iiird son of the seide kynge Edward the third,” and that they belong to Lionel’s descendants “afore any issu of the seide John of Gaunt.” Like the Philadelphia coronation roll, the Act of Accord suggests that there is a right line which can inherit the throne and a line which cannot inherit the throne. The throne, however, is not singular but rather the dual thrones of England and France. So, both manuscripts bar Gaunt’s descendants from the English and the French thrones.

The connection that both the Act of Accord and the coronation roll make between these two thrones also shows that, in claiming the French throne, Edward had to challenge the claim of the French king Louis XI. The coronation roll accomplishes this by dividing the family of the French king Philip IV into two branches. The first branch continues Philip IV’s lineage through his sons Philip, Louis, and Charles. The branch then merges with the English kings in the box of Philip’s daughter, Isabella, who married England’s King Edward II in 1308. Edward and Isabella’s family line continues all the way to Edward IV’s box. But the second branch follows the line of Philip IV’s brother, Charles, the Count of Valois. This line terminates in Katherine of Valois, the wife of England’s King Henry V and the mother of King Henry VI. The roll states that Isabella was the “filiam et heres philippi beli” and so rightfully possessed the crowns of England and France, whereas the line of the Valois kings was the “linea colaturalis in iure

135 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
136 Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole Rolls 33, membrane 1.
137 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 8.
succendi quo ad coronam Francie” (“daughter and heir of Philip the Fair” and “the collateral line in the right of succession with respect to the crown of France”). These Latin phrases suggest that Isabella was Philip’s true heir, not his brother Charles. Edward III’s assertion of this claim sparked the Hundred Years War.

So, this statement suggests that the fusion of the English and French thrones began, not with the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, but rather with the birth of Edward III in 1312. In one fell swoop, the statement denies any claim that the French king Louis XI had to the French throne. In fact, the roll argues that all the kings of France after Charles IV “usurpant” (“have usurped”) the throne. Therefore, while MS Lewis E 201 does try to legitimate Edward’s claim to the English throne, it also emphasizes Edward’s better claim to the French throne, not only over Henry VI, but over all other French kings after Charles IV.

The coronation roll also functions as a family history, reinforcing the notion that Edward desired to continue his father’s efforts to reclaim France. The roll describes Edward IV as the “filius et heres duci Ricardi ducis Eboracorum” and together father and son are labeled “veri heres Regnorum Anglie, Francie, Castelle et legionum” (“son and heir of Richard, Duke of York” and “true heirs to the kingdoms of England, France, Castile, and Léon”). The grouping of Edward and his father as collective heirs suggests that Edward had ascended to the throne in the place of York, fulfilling what his father had striven for but had never achieved. This description reveals that Edward had taken up his father’s task. And, as has already been shown, this task included securing the thrones of both England and France.

138 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
139 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
140 Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E 201 (online), membrane 9.
Other genealogical rolls reveal that, like York, Edward was also concerned with his family’s *worship*. Like the Philadelphia coronation roll, MS Oversize Roll 1066 in the University of Pennsylvania’s collection was most likely commissioned in 1461 around the time of Edward’s coronation. The roll includes a portrait of Edward IV yet gives no description of him. Rather, the roll terminates with Henry VI. While it is possible that the roll was never finished, this omission places emphasis on the description of Henry VI. Unlike the other genealogy, this genealogy focuses on the reigns of the kings and what they did, or did not, accomplish. Surprisingly, although the roll mentions that Richard II was led by “consilio iniquo” to “legauit” his kingdom to Henry, the Earl of Derby, the description does not suggest that Henry usurped the throne (“wicked counsel” and “bequeathed”).141 It is odd to frame Henry’s accession to the throne in this way, because his usurpation was one of Edward IV’s main claims to the throne. But unlike the Philadelphia coronation roll, this genealogy presents Edward as an inheritor through blood and deed. The description of Henry VI notes that he was crowned king of France but that it was the Duke of Bedford and later the Duke of York who “regens erat Francie” (“ruled France”).142 The word “regens” attributes power and authority to the Duke of York, revealing that he, and not Henry, was really the man in control.

The portrait of Henry VI highlights his impotence. Whereas his predecessors are all depicted with thick beards, Henry’s face is small and clean shaven. His robe also appears a bit too large, making him seem like a toddler wrapped in swaddling clothes. The portrait of Edward, however, presents him as dignified. Although clean-shaven, his face is longer and shows more

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141 University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Oversize Roll 1066 (online), membrane 13. Transcriptions provided on the website by Marie Turner.
142 University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Oversize Roll 1066 (online), membrane 13.
maturity. His robe is also trimmed in ermine—a symbol of kingship. This contrast between Henry VI and the York family implies that the Yorks were more capable of ruling than Henry.

A similar argument is found in Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 33, another genealogy likely commissioned by Edward IV. The roll was produced around 1469, postdating both Edward and Margaret’s marriages. Yet in 1469, Edward experienced another crisis of legitimacy in which he needed to prove his right to rule. And like the other two manuscripts, this genealogy again focuses the York family as a unit. I have thus decided to include it in my discussion to show the common language used throughout Edward’s reign. The roll describes Edward IV as “son and heyr of the most worshepful prince Richarde late duke of yorke, which was verye heyr of the reaumes englond and fraunce.”¹⁴³ Like the other two genealogies, this genealogy reiterates the fact that becoming king of England also meant being king of France. Yet in this roll, this specific phrasing is used only to describe the Duke of York and Edward IV. The genealogy mentions that Edward III had the “uictorie of the kyng of fraunce” and that Henry V was “assigned” the kingdom of France after his marriage to Katherine Valois, but neither are given the explicit title “king of England and of France.”¹⁴⁴ This choice presents Edward and his father as having the better claim to the throne.

The choice to call York “worshepful” also suggests that the genealogy seeks to reassert the York family’s worship. Since York is the only one given this description, he is presented as superior to all previous kings, even though he was never king himself. Moreover, Edward is presented as the “verye hyr of the reaumes aboue seid,” implying that he inherited his father’s titles as well as his worship.¹⁴⁵ So, this genealogy shows a preoccupation with proving the Duke

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¹⁴³ Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 33 (online), f. 62r-63v.
¹⁴⁴ Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 33 (online), f. 61v-62r.
¹⁴⁵ Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 33 (online), f. 63v.
of York’s worship and again suggests that this worship was connected to France. Therefore, both MS Oversize Roll 1066 and MS Lyell 33 reflect a similar effort to stress the York family’s connection to France.

Each of these three genealogies focuses on a different reason why Edward IV should be king of England. In MS Lewis E 201, Edward overtly claimed rulership over France by stressing Henry VI’s Englishness and by labeling Louis XI as a usurper. The manuscript thus focuses on Edward’s blood claim. In MS Oversize Roll 1066, Edward presented his father and himself as more capable kings than Henry VI, particularly when it came to ruling England’s French territories. And in MS Lyell 33, Edward presented his father as a worshipful duke and thus worthy of the throne. The latter two thus focus on ability alongside blood. The common thread among these genealogies is their emphasis on the York family’s claims to both England and France. This emphasis suggests that Edward desired to continue his father’s efforts to make this claim a reality.

Edward’s Marriage in the Chronicles

The rhetoric of both the Duke of York and Edward IV shows that the emphasis on their French heritage stemmed from a desire to regain their family’s worship. When Edward IV ascended to the throne in 1461, he could now execute this aim. Several fifteenth-century chronicles suggest that Edward’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville helped him in carrying out this goal. Gregory’s Chronicle is a fifteenth-century chronicle that records England’s history from the death of King Richard I in 1189 to the year 1470.146 Gregory’s Chronicle includes the

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146 The chronicle was named Gregory’s Chronicle by its first editor, James Gairdner, who posited that the first half of the chronicle was written by William Gregory, a skinner and mayor of London from 1450-1. “Introduction,” in The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century, ed. James Gairdner, i-xli. British History Online, accessed May 17, 2021 http://www.british-history.ac.uk/camden-record-soc/vol17/i-xli. Scholars are
infamous line “take hede what loue may doo” that many scholars have used to support the love-match theory of Edward’s marriage. Yet given the literary tradition of love as a destructive force that can break alliances and elicit anger or grief, the line may also draw attention to the relationship between Edward and his ally Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. Such a reinterpretation requires an understanding of the textual context and the placement of the chronicle itself within the larger manuscript.

Gregory’s Chronicle is found uniquely in MS Egerton 1995 in the British Library. MS Egerton 1995 is a commonplace book and so includes a variety of texts which all seem to have been included in the original manuscript. Some of these texts include John Lydgate’s verses on the kings of England, medicinal texts, a poem about the siege of Rouen, a list of the churches in London, and even texts on English hunting customs. David Parker argues that the manuscript was most likely compiled by someone who was not “a part of the noble class” but who “would very much like to be,” selecting texts that would allow him to climb the social ladder. Parker’s argument suggests that the compiler chose texts based on the insight they could provide into upper-class life. It is possible, then, that the chronicle reflects such interests.

One such episode could be Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage. Before recounting this marriage, the chronicler writes: “nowe take hede what loue may doo, for loue wylle not nor may not caste no favte nor perelle in noothyng.” To a modern reader, the chronicler seems to allude

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148 The Contemporary English Chronicles, 4. This view is also argued by David Parker in The Commonplace Book in Tudor England (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 20.
149 Parker, Commonplace Book, 26; 34.
150 Gregory’s Chronicle, in The Contemporary English Chronicles, 81. In MS Egerton 1995, the scribe uses rounded u’s instead of angled v’s. This scribal choice adds ambiguity to this line. This could render “love” as “loue,” another Middle English word that describes a flame of envy or hatred. MED, s.v. “loue,” (n. 2) 2b, accessed May 17, 2021, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26183/tr...
to Edward’s love for Elizabeth, believing that this love caused grief and that Edward had acted with little judgment. While the line does reveal the negative effects of love, this statement recalls the *Bestiaire d’amour*, suggesting that there is a deeper meaning behind the chronicler’s account.

First, the chronicler personifies Love and argues that it is a violent emotion. The opening words “nowe take hede” automatically signal that the consequences of love will not be happy, but there is other language that supports the connection between love and violence. The chronicler also could be using the language of the hunt. In MS Egerton 1995, the hunting texts precede the chronicle. These lines introduce the first hunting text:

Note ye the properteys that longythe to a yonge gentylleman to haue knowynge of suche thynghys that longythe vnto hym that he payle not in hys propyr termys that longythe vnto hym as hyt shalle folowe here ynne wrytyng.

This passage is followed by a list of the different animals in the hunt, the conditions for a good greyhound, and terms on hawking. It indicates that the following sections describe terms which belong to a specific vocabulary for a specific context. Notably, when the writer starts to describe the actual hunt, he notes that, as a first step, “A hunter castythe of a cepylle of alundys vnto an herde of hertys.” This line refers to the part of the hunt in which the dogs (the alundys) are released (castythe) from their leashes and are sent to hunt down a herd of harts (stags).

These words are important because, if one reads the manuscript sequentially, then a reader arrives at the chronicle with these hunting terms in mind. So, when reading “loue wylle not nor may not caste no favte nor perelle in noothyng,” images of the hunt could be conjured in

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151 British Library, MS Egerton 1995, f. 55v.
152 British Library, MS Egerton 1995, f. 63v.
the reader’s mind, as it would recall the hunter releasing his hounds from their leash. While the animal could be an unspecified prey, the line suggests that the chronicler had a certain hunt in mind. “Cast” as used in the hunting text in MS Egerton 1995 refers to hounds being released to hunt a stag. Adolfo Cavallo argues that the stag hunt was the likely model for the unicorn hunt in artistic depictions. The word “cast” recalls unicorn hunt iconography in other ways, too. The most common weapons to kill the unicorn—a spear or arrow—are “cast.” In arguing that Love does not think about the consequences of her actions, the chronicler creates irony by showing that Love casts her hounds and her weapons without casting a glance around to survey the area. Like Love in the Bestiaire d’amour, Love in Gregory’s Chronicle is a sneaky huntress who seems to be sneaking up on a unicorn.

While it is easy to assume that this language portrays Edward as the victim of Love, the chronicler’s description of Edward’s marriage suggests that Edward is actually Love’s accomplice, reinforcing the interpretation of the line as a reference to the unicorn hunt. When describing the marriage, the chronicler explains that Edward married Elizabeth in secret and then hid the marriage for several months. Then, on All Hallows Day, Edward convened his councilors who expressed their fears that Edward “had be not chaste of hys leuynge.” This line suggests that Edward functions as the virgin character in a unicorn hunt scenario. Since the councilors feared that Edward was no longer a virgin, he does not seem to fit this role. However, the chronicler relies on the double meaning of “chaste” to explain how Edward does fit this role. In the Bestiaire d’amour, the virgin’s chastity is ironic, because the word “chaste” was also used to

155 Cavallo, The Unicorn Tapestries, 29. For examples see Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308 (online), fol. 94r; Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), fr. 12469 (online); BnF, fr. 1444d (online).
156 Gregory’s Chronicle, in The Contemporary English Chronicles, 81.
describe a person’s character.\footnote{MED, s.v. “chaste,” (adj.) 2a, accessed May 17, 2021 \url{https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED7302/track?counter=1&search_id=4288120}.} Although Fournival’s virgin keeps her body pure from sexual intercourse, she is not morally chaste, because she abandons Fournival’s desires in favor of Love’s. The line in \textit{Gregory’s Chronicle} employs a similar irony. Since the conversation between Edward and his councilors takes place after the chronicler describes Edward’s marriage, the reader already knows that Edward is no longer a virgin, even though his councilors hope he is. Therefore, the line confirms the councilors’ fears and so emphasizes Edward’s betrayal of their trust. Like the virgin in Fournival’s account, Edward seemed to be chaste, yet he was not.

The chronicler continues his account to reveal that the Earl of Warwick was the unicorn, the one wounded the most by this breach of trust. When the chronicler starts to describe the council, Elizabeth disappears from the narrative and Warwick appears. After the line about Edward’s suspected chastity, the chronicler notes that the councilors were so eager for Edward to marry that they “wold sente” someone “intoo sum stronge lond to inquere a quene good of byrthe.”\footnote{Gregory’s Chronicle, in \textit{The Contemporary English Chronicles}, 81.} This was a reference to a request from France asking Edward to marry a French princess, and the likely ambassador was Warwick who “advocated” for the alliance.\footnote{Ross, \textit{Edward IV}, 90; 87.} Immediately after this line, the chronicler writes that Edward “told hem howe he hadde done,” and disclosed his marriage.\footnote{Gregory’s Chronicle, in \textit{The Contemporary English Chronicles}, 81-2.} Then the account ends. The final twist underlines the irony of Edward’s marriage—Warwick had been tasked to secure a marriage for a king who was already married. So, as in Fournival’s \textit{Bestiaire d’amour}, this passage in \textit{Gregory’s Chronicle} reveals that Edward fell in love at a price. By marrying Elizabeth instead of a French princess, Edward
demonstrated that he no longer followed Warwick’s advice nor found Warwick to be a sound advisor, casting doubt on Warwick’s ability to influence Edward’s decisions.

To fully fit the literary trope, though, the chronicler must also imply that the severing of this political relationship fulfilled some purpose. One explanation could be that Warwick impeded Edward’s desire to make war with France. Another anonymous fifteenth-century English chronicler argues that Warwick was annoyed by Edward’s marriage because “for some years” he had “favour[ed] the French.”¹⁶¹ Likewise, the writer and diplomat Philippe de Commynes indicated that his former master, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Earl of Warwick “did not get on well together because the Earl of Warwick was always hand in glove with the king [Louis XI],” who was Commynes’ new master.¹⁶² These two statements suggest that Warwick wanted an Anglo-French alliance and that he had even befriended the French king. As a result, Edward needed to break his alliance with Warwick to avoid forming one with France.

Although the chronicler of Gregory’s Chronicle does not explicitly state this purpose, this account brings this disagreement to the forefront. By warning the reader to “take hede” before reading about the marriage, the chronicler recalls the language of the hunt that appears in the preceding texts on hunting customs. This hunting language evokes the theme of love working with a virgin accomplice to wound a victim. The chronicler thus suggests that the marriage really involved three parties instead of two. Warwick became the unicorn who pledged loyalty to another. And just like the unicorn, Warwick’s ally chose to pledge faith to another. Therefore, the chronicler reveals that love became the means by which Edward severed a political bond.

Gregory’s Chronicle reveals how Edward’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville severed his relationship with Warwick. Other fifteenth-century chronicles suggest that the severing of this

¹⁶¹ Crowland Chronicle, in Dockray, Edward IV, 59.
¹⁶² Philippe de Commynes, Mémoirs, the Reign of Louis XI, 1461-1483, in Dockray, Edward IV, 62.
bond disworshipped Warwick and provoked him to respond with violence. *Warkworth’s Chronicle* also includes an account of Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage. Unlike *Gregory’s Chronicle*, *Warkworth’s Chronicle* has presented less of an interpretive challenge for historians because of its seemingly dry nature. Bertie Wilkinson contrasts the two, arguing that the author of *Warkworth’s Chronicle* did not seem to “sens[e] any great thrill of romance.”

Wilkinson’s comment is not wrong. The chronicler states who Elizabeth was and then says that she and Edward married, giving no explicit explanation for the match. But despite the seeming lack of romance, the account is not devoid of emotional language. It is this language which connects the two chronicles.

*Warkworth’s Chronicle* covers a shorter time period than *Gregory’s Chronicle*, only covering the years 1461-1474. The chronicle is named after a suspected author, although the real author has not been determined. Whoever he was, however, this author seems to have been a contemporary to the events of the Wars of the Roses, especially in the years 1469 and after. Some historians have argued that the widespread inaccuracies in the first half of the chronicle (1461-69) reflect the author’s distance from the events both temporally and spatially. Still, it is possible that these “inaccuracies” reflect deliberate authorial choices to find the deeper meaning behind events. Like the author of *Gregory’s Chronicle*, this chronicler suggests that Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage had a grave impact on Edward’s relationship with Warwick.

Although Warkworth provides no explanation for why Edward decided to marry Elizabeth, he frames the marriage in a way that, like *Gregory’s Chronicle*, creates a relationship triangle among Edward, Elizabeth, and Warwick. This chronicler prefaces his account by noting

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165 *The Contemporary English Chronicles*, 266-7 and Keith Dockray, *Edward IV*, x, notes that the details are sometimes “confused” and “confusing.”
that in “the iiiij yere of Kynge Edward” when “the Erle of Warwyke was sent into Fraunce for a maryage” Edward was “wedde to Elisabeth Gray.”¹⁶⁶ Modern historians know that this statement is false. In May of 1464, Warwick was in Scotland fighting off Lancastrian forces. While the detail could be a product of faulty memory, reading the account in light of Fournival’s Bestiaire d’amour or Gregory’s Chronicle suggests that this choice could be deliberate. Like Gregory’s Chronicle, this line creates irony by showing that Warwick was out of the country negotiating a marriage for a king who was already married. The author’s description of Elizabeth adds to this irony. The author mentions that Elizabeth was the “widow” of “Sere Jhon Gray” who “was slayne at Yorke Feld in Kynge Herry partye.”¹⁶⁷ This detail adds insult to injury. Edward had not only failed to make an Anglo-French alliance but had also squandered this opportunity by marrying a woman who had been married to an ally of the very people Warwick and Edward were trying to defeat. The description thus presents Warwick like a Fournivalian unicorn—he, too, was betrayed by the very person who had pledged loyalty to him.

The author of Warkworth’s Chronicle also includes emotional language to suggest that this marriage had disworshipped Warwick. If the reader had not already begun to grasp some of the tension created by Edward’s choice of bride, then the author makes it undeniable when he writes, “when the Erle of Warwyke come home and herde hereof, then was he gretely displesyd with the kynge” and “after þat rose grete discencyon euere more and more.”¹⁶⁸ The words “gretely displesyd” indicate that Warwick was averse to the marriage. The word “discencyon” reveals that the marriage created a rift in Warwick and Edward’s relationship. Taken together, these words suggest that the marriage disworshipped Warwick. Because the chronicler starts the

¹⁶⁶ Warkworth’s Chronicle, in The Contemporary English Chronicles, 114.
¹⁶⁷ Warkworth’s Chronicle, in The Contemporary English Chronicles, 114.
¹⁶⁸ Warkworth’s Chronicle, in The Contemporary English Chronicles, 115.
account by noting Warwick’s ambassadorial mission to France, he implies that Warwick’s displeasure was a response to Edward’s slighting of his foreign policy. So, Warwick’s displeasure also likely reflected his concern that this marriage would cost him his influence in Edward’s court.

The next passage confirms this fear as it describes Edward’s efforts to hurt the Neville family’s standing. Immediately after recounting Edward’s marriage, the chronicler notes that “the kynge put oute of th... chauncelerschepp the Bysshope of Excetre, brother to þe Erle of Warwyke” and that Edward also demoted Warwick’s brother John from being Earl of Northumberland to the Lord Montagu. There are several factual errors in these details. Neither event took place in 1464. The Bishop of Exeter was demoted in 1467, and John was demoted in 1470. The question, then, is why the chronicler recorded that they took place directly after Edward’s marriage. Again, the choice seems deliberate. The chronicler notes that after the demotion of Warwick’s first brother, Edward and Warwick “neuere loffyd togedere aftere.”

The word “loffyd” highlights the bond between Edward and Warwick—they were linked by their love (loyalty) to each other. But here the chronicler shows that this bond had been severed, and so their love was no more. Warwick was losing his ability to influence Edward’s decisions. And so, Warwick again serves as the unicorn betrayed by his lover. While the demotion of his brothers constituted a betrayal, placing these events so close to Edward’s marriage suggests that the chronicler viewed Edward’s marriage as the original source of conflict between the two. Therefore, Warkworth’s Chronicle also shows that Edward’s marriage involved a third party who was wounded by the match. Yet this chronicler went further, using emotional language and

these slights to the Neville family’s standing to imply that the marriage had disworshipped Warwick.

The fifteenth-century French chronicler Jean de Wavrin also suggests that the marriage disworshipped Warwick by focusing on Warwick’s public display of anger. Although French in origin, Wavrin served Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and later Philip’s son Charles, giving his account a Burgundian, and thus an outsider, perspective.\textsuperscript{171} His perspective, of course, is not unbiased. As a supporter of the Burgundian dukes, Wavrin had a clear reason for disliking Warwick. As Livia Visser-Fuchs notes, Warwick “embodied” the Anglo-French alliance that “threatened the very existence of the Burgundian ‘state’.”\textsuperscript{172} His opinion of Warwick was therefore unfavorable, yet it still reveals England, France, and Burgundy’s close connection and what an Anglo-French alliance might signal to other rulers.\textsuperscript{173}

In his account of Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage, Wavrin demonstrates an understanding of the importance of marriage ceremonies in making public displays of power. His account of their wedding marks the end of the fourth volume and the beginning of the fifth. My use of the word “wedding” here is intentional—unlike the previously mentioned chroniclers, Wavrin actually suggests that Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage was a public celebration. The first public act occurs in Edward’s disclosure of the marriage. Like the author of \textit{Gregory’s Chronicle}, Wavrin describes a scene in which Edward and his councilors are discussing his marriage prospects. In Wavrin’s account, however, Edward is single and still deciding who to wed. The councilors ask, “qui il se volroit alyer” (“with whom he wanted to unite himself”).\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{171} Dockray, \textit{Edward IV}, xviii. This is the same Charles who married Edward’s sister Margaret.
\textsuperscript{172} Livia Visser-Fuchs, “Warwick and Wavrin: Two Case Studies on the Literary Background and Propaganda of Anglo-Burgundian Relations in the Yorkist Period” (PhD. diss., University College London, 2002), 5.
\textsuperscript{173} Visser-Fuchs, “Warwick and Wavrin,” 204-5.
\textsuperscript{174} Jean de Wavrin, \textit{Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Breaigne, A Present Nomme Engleterre}, vol. 5., ed. William Hardy (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1967), 455. I’ve chosen “unite” as the
The word “alyer” is important, because it shows that Edward’s councilors were thinking about foreign policy. They wanted Edward to espouse someone with whom he could form a political alliance. Yet in response, Edward states that “vouloit avoer a femme la fille du seigneur de la Riviere” (“he wanted to have as a wife the daughter of Lord Rivers”). This response shows a disconnect between Edward and his councilors. While his advisors were hoping to use Edward’s marriage to form a diplomatic alliance, Edward claimed that his marriage would fulfill no such purpose. This introduction to Edward’s marriage confirms that the union did not conform to traditional marriage strategies.

Wavrin continues, though, revealing that Edward’s choice of bride did conform to medieval customs of disputing. In the subsequent chapters, Wavrin describes the wedding ceremony. Edward and Elizabeth went through a period of “fyanchages” (“period of engagement”) and then they celebrated their “feste…des ses noepces” (“wedding feast”). This description should baffle anyone familiar with the English chronicles. Whereas the authors of _Warkworth’s Chronicle_ and _Gregory’s Chronicle_ present the marriage as taking place in secret, Wavrin argues that Edward and Elizabeth completed the necessary steps in the medieval marriage process: there was a period of engagement, a wedding, and then a public celebration of the marriage. Since these details are so contrary to other contemporary chronicles, it could be that Wavrin had misinformation, or that he wanted to show that the marriage was “legitimate” in the eyes of the Church. Yet despite its difference from the English chronicles, Wavrin’s account is not unlike accounts of French and Burgundian weddings. Geneviève Ribordy’s study of marriages among the medieval French nobility shows that elaborate wedding feasts and

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appropriate translation of “alyer” to show that it refers both to the hoped-for union between man and woman and the hoped-for union between their respective territories.

175 Wavrin, _Recueil des Croniques_, 455.
176 Wavrin, _Recueil des Croniques_, 456.
processions were part of the nobility’s display of power. The more elaborate the celebrations, the more the party portrayed themselves as magnificent.\textsuperscript{177} The wedding thus needed to be a public spectacle in order to make this statement.

By framing Edward’s marriage as a public event, Wavrin implied that it made a similar statement of power. Although the dukes, earls, counts, and other noblemen attended the wedding, Wavrin notes that they did not enjoy the festivities. In fact, Wavrin wrote that “Warewic se party de la court, si emmena avec luy plusieurs gens de bien, dont le roy fut durement courouchie” (“Warwick departed from the court, and led with himself several men of means, because he was angry with the king”).\textsuperscript{178} Wavrin noted later on that this anger stemmed from Edward’s subsequent promotion of the Woodville family and the fact that Warwick could tell “le roy lavoit prins en hayne” (“the king had conceived a hatred for him”).\textsuperscript{179} These statements bear a resemblance to Warkworth’s Chronicle. In medieval French literature, a lord who was “courouchie” believed he had been wronged, and so he could enact vengeance. Richard Barton argues that this anger “could and did serve as a warning sign to society” that “the social relationships would have to be restructured.”\textsuperscript{180} Here Warwick expressed his anger over his severed relationship with Edward. The qualification that Warwick believed Edward had begun to hate him reveals that this severed relationship brought Warwick disworship. Warwick recognized that he was losing influence at Edward’s court and was being isolated from the king. So, Wavrin’s mention of Warwick’s anger signaled to his readers that Warwick had been disworshipped and that this act could be resolved through more violence.

\textsuperscript{177} Geneviève Ribordy, \textit{Faire les Nopces: le mariage de la noblesses française, 1375-1475} (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004).
\textsuperscript{178} Wavrin, \textit{Recueil des Croniques}, 456.
\textsuperscript{179} Wavrin, \textit{Recueil des Croniques}, 458.
\textsuperscript{180} Barton, “‘Zealous Anger,’” 154.
Therefore, Wavrin presents Edward’s marriage as both typical and atypical. By presenting the marriage in the familiar Burgundian fashion, he could show his readers how the marriage was a display of Edward’s power. But the marriage was atypical because this display of power created discord rather than unity. This type of conflict, however, was not unknown to Wavrin and his readers. This conflict suggested that the marriage disworshipped Warwick: it offended Warwick because it attacked his *worship*, and he aired this grievance in order to regain his political capital.

The final indication that the marriage disworshipped Warwick comes from Robert Fabyan’s the *Great Chronicle of London*. In his account of Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage, Fabyan suggests that one act of violence led to another. Just as the other three chroniclers, Fabyan starts his account with debates over foreign policy. He states that “the kyng…sent Therle of warwyk with othyr noble perssonys In ambassade unto the kyng of spayn to entrete of a maryage atwene the kyng and the Systyr of the said prynce.”¹⁸¹ By this point we know that Warwick was not on an ambassadorial mission at this time. Yet like the other English chronicles, this detail emphasizes that Warwick was absent because he was trying to arrange a marriage for Edward. Warwick is presented as earnestly working towards securing a diplomatic alliance.

And yet again, Edward worked against him. Fabyan writes, “[before] the said Erle Retournyd the kyng was soo fervently enamowrid” with Elizabeth Woodville that “he maryed hyr wythowth advice and counsayll” on “the first day of Maii.”¹⁸² The punchline here is the same—while Warwick was trying to bring home a foreign bride, Edward married an English one. Yet here Fabyan gives an explicit reason for why the couple married. The word

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“enamowrid” indicates that love was the primary impulse behind Edward’s decision. Still, like the author of *Gregory’s Chronicle*, Fabyan seems to emphasize Edward’s love for Elizabeth to show its effects on his and Warwick’s relationship. After describing the details of the marriage, Fabyan writes that the union “kyndelyd afftyr mwch unkeyndnes atwene the kyng and the said Erle” and “much hert brennyg was evyr aftyr atwene the Erle and the Quenys blood.”

The phrases “kyndelyd” and “hert brennyg” suggest that this marriage disworshipped Warwick. The fire imagery creates a parallel between Edward and Warwick’s emotions. In Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale*, the knight Arcite recounts the story of Venus’ and Mars’ adulterous relationship. He notes that Mars “brendest for desir” for “faire, yonge, fresshe Venus,” using this metaphor to describe the consuming nature of Mars’ desire. Fire imagery could be used to describe both love and anger. In Fabyan’s story, the word describes both. It was Edward’s love for Elizabeth that sparked Warwick’s anger. So, while Fabyan suggests that love was the cause of Edward’s marriage, this love matters because it severed the bond between Edward and Warwick. So here again this love/anger combination suggested that Warwick had been disworshipped. Warwick recognized that Edward’s marriage altered he and the king’s relationship. The queen’s family gained influence as Warwick lost his. His anger, then, was a response to his disworship. The word “kyndelyd” confirms that the marriage disworshipped Warwick, because it suggests that, like fire, Warwick’s anger would keep spreading until it was put out. Warwick wanted to enact violence, because violence had been done to him.

It is the ability of Warwick’s anger to spread and cause destruction that worries Fabyan. He notes that this fire grew so great that it “flamyd Into Flaundyrs and Fraunce.” While this

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line could be an exaggeration to emphasize the extent of Warwick’s anger, Fabyan suggests that the phrase could also be interpreted literally. He writes that in 1469, “the spark of Envy spokyn of…began to kyndyll among the lordys that partyes were made” and “the Duke of Clarence secretly departed from the kyng” to join Warwick and sail to France.\textsuperscript{186} Here Fabyan reveals the consequences of Warwick’s anger—it actually spread into France. In 1469, Warwick no longer supported Edward’s reign as king and led an open rebellion. Although unsuccessful at first, in 1470, he enlisted the help of the French king in overthrowing Edward and the duo temporarily won power. While this uprising may seem simply treasonous, it also demonstrates Warwick’s use of lawful violence. Warwick had been disworshipped by Edward’s marriage to Elizabeth and could regain his \textit{worship} by defeating Edward in battle. Fabyan’s account thus presents Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage as a classic case of \textit{diswa}rship. It not only deprived Warwick of influence at Edward’s court, but it also compelled him to respond to this violence with more violence.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to show that “love” was a complicated emotion in the medieval period. While it could have been an impetus behind Edward’s marriage, it is likely that the word was also used to emphasize the souring relationship between Edward and Warwick. In choosing to marry Elizabeth, Edward disworshipped Warwick, prompting the earl to respond with violence. Still, as the \textit{Great Chronicle} shows, Edward’s marriage was not the end of the story. By allying with France, Warwick handed Edward an excuse to make war on the French. And notably, Edward mustered support against Warwick in Flanders. These acts reveal that Edward’s

\textsuperscript{186} Fabyan, \textit{Great Chronicle}, 208; 210.
marriage to Elizabeth was not the only source of conflict between him and Warwick. We will now turn to analyzing Margaret of York’s marriage to Charles, the Duke of Burgundy, to understand how this match may have also disworshipped the French king Louis XI, further suggesting that Edward viewed France as a sight for proving his family’s *worship*. 
CHAPTER 3: DISWORSHIP AND MARGARET OF YORK’S MARRIAGE

The previous chapter demonstrated how Edward IV could have used his own marriage to Elizabeth Woodville to disworship his ally Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. This chapter analyzes a similar phenomenon in the marriage of Edward’s sister Margaret of York to Charles, the Duke of Burgundy. Although open conflict between Edward and Warwick did not break out immediately after Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage, it did after Margaret and Charles’ wedding. The couple wed in 1468, and less than a year later, Warwick fled to Calais and started gathering forces to overthrow Edward. His first attempts were unsuccessful, but in 1470, with the backing of France, he was able to restore (briefly) Edward’s Lancastrian opponent to power. So, this chapter explores the context surrounding Margaret and Charles’ marriage and how the match served as the deathblow to Warwick’s worship and as an attack on the worship of the French king Louis XI as a way to provoke war between England, France, and Burgundy.

I start by reviewing previous interpretations of the marriage and move into a discussion on the Burgundian court and its rivalry with the French as shown in Margaret and Charles’ dispensation and in French and Burgundian chronicles. Then, I discuss the role of public wedding ceremonies in late medieval Burgundian society. The chapter ends with an analysis of two fifteenth-century chronicles, one Burgundian and one English, which show how the marriage disworshipped Louis and Warwick.

Margaret’s Marriage as an Alliance

The intent behind Margaret and Charles’ union seems self-evident: an English princess married a Burgundian duke to seal both a commercial and defensive alliance between the two territories. This nature of the marriage can be seen in two treaties. They read as follows:
in considering the arrangement of the marriage between us and the most illustrious lady Margaret, sister of the aforementioned king our cousin...we offer and promise...to protect and defend for ever (sic), to our power, the realm of England and the lands and dominions of the King and his successors.  

and

that all merchants, as well of the realm of England, of Ireland, and of Calais, as the merchants of the duchy, county and country of Brabant, Flanders, the town and lordship of Malines, and other countries of our said cousin the Duke, be they merchants of wool, leathers, or victuals, or of other merchandise, their factors and servants may go in safety by land, on foot, on horseback, or otherwise, passing on and over the water...to trade with one other with all manner of merchandise.

The treaties reveal the reciprocal nature of the marriage. The alliance was intended to foster peaceful trade relations between the two principalities and to ensure that each would come to the other’s defense in times of crisis.

Still, the treaties only reflect half of the story. While an alliance was eventually reached, the marriage did not take place without difficulty. When Edward married Elizabeth Woodville in 1464, there was tension between England and France. Yet there was even greater enmity between France’s King Louis XI and the heir to the Burgundian dukedom, Charles, the Count of Charolais. In 1465, Charles led Brittany and other French territories in the War of Public Weal against Louis. Despite the costs of full-scale fighting, neither Charles nor Louis was willing to concede defeat. Charles wanted power, and Louis did not want to give it to him. This tension escalated in 1465 when Charles’ second wife Isabella of Bourbon died, leaving him free to marry again. These hostile relations between France and Burgundy meant that just as Edward had to choose amity either with Burgundy or with France, Charles had to choose between France or England.

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188 England Under the Yorkists, 203.
Given their shared dislike for France, an Anglo-Burgundian alliance seems like an obvious choice. Yet Mark Ballard notes that despite Edward and Charles’ shared dislike of Louis, the rulers had to consider other factors before making any final decision. Charles descended from the Lancastrian line, and so as much as he hated France, he was not particularly eager to work with the Yorkist King Edward. But economically speaking, England seemed like the better choice for Burgundy. Several scholars have focused on the trade relations established by the Anglo-Burgundian marriage alliance. Although England and Burgundy had a history of trade, Charles’ father Duke Philip the Good had placed an embargo on English cloth in 1464. This embargo prevented free trade between the two principalities. Yet, as Marie-Rose Thielemans has argued, once Philip died, Charles—now duke of Burgundy—was able to advance his own agenda, and he used the advantages of trade with England to persuade his noblemen to support his cause against the French. She thus suggests that economic factors weighed heavily in Charles’ decision.

Economics was certainly an important factor behind the match, yet it is not the only reason historians have explored. Margaret of York’s biographer Luc Hommel believed that Charles was more politically motivated and desired “to assemble” his “principalities” into “a kingdom” in an effort to present himself as an equal to kings like Louis and Edward. Hommel

191 Ross, Edward IV, 105.
suggests that, at least for Charles, the marriage was a power move and one that reflected his dynastic concerns.

Charles Armstrong and Richard Vaughan saw the match more as an attempt to thwart France’s power rather than increase Charles’ power. Armstrong argues that Charles’ decision was “subordinated to military considerations,” because he needed a “defense against Louis XI.” This interpretation emphasizes the tension between the two leaders and suggests that Charles feared a physical battle would take place. Vaughan wrote that “long before he became the duke of Burgundy,” Charles “had taken important diplomatic initiatives to protect himself, specifically, from possible French aggression,” and so he “w[o]n the friendship of Edward IV” by marrying Margaret of York. While this interpretation seems similar to Armstrong’s, Vaughan proposes that the marriage was not used to prepare the Burgundians for an actual physical attack but was rather an effort to “keep up appearances” and appease his allies in Berry and Brittany who did want war. Vaughan suggests that in 1468, Charles had no intention of starting war with France.

The Marriage and Conflict

These interpretations of the marriage are all plausible, and they highlight the complexity of the situation. Nevertheless, despite acknowledging the tensions between the three principalities, these historians portray the marriage as an alliance and as something to keep the French at bay rather than something to ignite war purposefully. My interpretation of the sources,

196 Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, 53.
however, suggests that war was the goal. In the midst of Margaret’s marriage negotiations, Edward announced to parliament that his sister Margaret would wed the Duke of Burgundy which would allow him to “goo over the See into Fraunce” and “subdue his grete Rebell and Adversary Lowes, usurpaunt Kyng of the same.”  

In her biography of Edward IV, Cora Scofield interprets this speech as a manifestation of Edward’s desire to reclaim the territories England had lost in the Hundred Years War. Scofield’s interpretation of the marriage is similar to my own, yet there are two key differences. First, she isolates Edward and Charles’ motivations and does not consider whether Charles also needed war with France. Second, she suggests that Edward used the marriage to gather forces that would attack France. She does not consider whether the marriage itself was an act of violence that attacked Louis and Warwick’s worship.

This interpretation of the marriage as a way to disworship Louis and Warwick requires an examination of how the conflicts between Burgundy and France and between France and England overlapped. While Vaughan does not believe that war between France and Burgundy was possible in 1468, he suggests that the conflict between Edward and Warwick in 1469 allowed Louis to “open his war of revenge against Charles.” Thus, conflict in England allowed for open conflict between France and Burgundy. Since the actions of one leader affected the decisions of the other, it is worth asking whether the conflict between Edward and Warwick was intended to give Louis this opportunity. Vaughan’s use of the word “revenge” is interesting, because it suggests that Louis had a legitimate reason for attacking Charles in 1469. While this

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197 Rotuli Parliamentorum, vol. 5, ed. J. Strachey and others, (London, 1775), 622-3. Here Edward is referring to France’s King Louis XI.
198 Scofield, Edward IV, vol. 1, 403.
199 Vaughan, Charles the Bold, 60.
reason could be linked to the unsettled tensions during the War of Public Weal, it could also be a response to Margaret and Charles’ wedding.

Peter Clarke has studied Margaret and Charles’ papal dispensation and argues that it reflects the strain in relations among France, Burgundy, and England over the marriage. Clarke notes that the couple had applied for a dispensation in fall of 1467, but it was denied because the papal legate in England “doubted whether it was drawn up in the proper form.” So, they had to request again. One curious feature is that the dispensation omits Charles and Margaret’s noble status. Clarke reasons that this omission could reveal that Charles did not want to “attract too much attention” to the union. In other words, Charles did not want to notify Louis XI that such a marriage was in the works. These details are striking for a few reasons. If the first request had been completed improperly, that could be a sign that it had been rushed. Edward and Charles seem to have been eager to move the wedding forward.

Moreover, the corrected dispensation also reflects the Pope’s concerns about the marriage. Although the degrees of consanguinity prompted the need for a dispensation, the Pope also writes that the couple could wed “provided that” Margaret “had not been abducted.” This stipulation is given twice, stressing its importance. The fear that Margaret had been abducted again adds a sense of urgency to the marriage. But this is an atypical detail. In his extensive study of papal dispensations, David d’Avray lists only one dispensation in which fear of abduction was mentioned. But in this case, the pope was much more concerned with Enrique IV of Castile’s claim of impotence and the use of magic. In her study on rape and abduction in

200 Peter Clarke, “English Royal Marriages and the Papal Penitentiary in the Fifteenth Century,” The English Historical Review 120 no. 488 (Sept. 2005): 1019, JSTOR.
medieval England, Caroline Dunn describes a case in 1368 in which the couple was permitted to marry so long as an abduction had not taken place. But Dunn suggests that this stipulation may just reflect that “a young lady of noble means might be the target of abduction” because of her wealth or status.\textsuperscript{204} Most dispensations thus reflect the Pope’s desire to promote peace among the kingdoms of Christendom and are often not concerned with threats of abduction.

So, the Pope’s mention of an abduction is odd. Yet abductions were not unheard of in the fifteenth century. Dunn also notes that abductions of women were sometimes used to carry out a feud and force relatives of the abductee to submit to the abductor’s demands.\textsuperscript{205} So, the Pope’s mention of an abduction may reveal anxiety over the political situation in northern Europe. The Pope seems to have recognized tension among the three leaders and feared that Louis XI would not be happy if he learned of the Anglo-Burgundian marriage alliance.

Happy he was not. In a letter to the duke of Milan, the Milanese ambassador Lorenzo di Pisauro writes that “I have offered assistance to Master Olivero, ambassador of the King of France, to prevent the dispensation between the Duke of Burgundy and the King of England from being accorded.”\textsuperscript{206} This statement shows Louis XI’s efforts to thwart the Anglo-Burgundian marriage. Another ambassador echoed this sentiment a few months later. Margaret and Charles’ marriage had been delayed again so that Edward could raise enough funds to provide for Margaret’s dowry. By that point, some had begun to suspect whether the marriage would actually take place, and the ambassador writes that Louis hoped to use this extra time to “have a conference” with Charles and to “do his utmost to break this family connection.”\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{205} Dunn, \textit{Stolen Women}, 161.
\textsuperscript{207} “Milan: 1468.”
Louis’ meddling in the marriage arrangements reveals his vested interest in Anglo-Burgundian relations.

Other accounts reveal Louis’ fear concerning what an Anglo-Burgundian alliance would signal for France. The aforementioned Burgundian chronicler Jean de Wavrin also notes that Louis XI tried to prevent Margaret and Charles’ wedding. He assigns motives to Louis’ actions. He writes that the couple wed “in spite of the opposition or obstacles that the king of France had wanted to put there,” because it had been Louis’ intention to “make an alliance with the English to wage war for the destruction of Burgundy.”208 Again we see Louis working actively to prevent the match. Yet the word destruction suggests that Louis’ desires were not purely territorial in nature. The word instead implies that destroying Burgundy was a goal in itself, suggesting that hatred or vengeance was Louis’ primary motive. It is thus clear that a war between the principalities was likely to break out, whether it was France and England against Burgundy, Burgundy and France against England, or England and Burgundy against France.

The Anglo-Burgundian alliance determined that the war would be against France. The French chronicler Philippe de Commines reveals these intentions in his account of the marriage. Commines states that Charles married Margaret “principally to strengthen his position against the king [of France],” even though “he hated the Yorkists.”209 The shoring up of defenses suggests that Charles feared an attack and that he was trying to bolster his troops in case France struck first. But the use of the word “hatred” to describe Charles’ emotional relationship with the Yorkists suggests that Charles’ decision was sparked less by fear and more by calculation. He could ally himself with someone he hated, because he hated Louis more. So, Commines implies

208 Wavrin, Recueil des Croniques, 559, “non obstant contredis ou empeschemens que y eust voullu mettre le roy de France, quy de tout son povoir avoit contenu de avoir allyances auz Anglois pour contendre a destruire ycelluy duc de Bourguoine.”
209 Commines, Mémoires, in Dockray, Edward IV, 61-2.
that this strengthening of forces would be used to attack France. Mark Ballard’s examination of English deployments in Liège supports this notion. Edward had sent archers to Liège as reinforcements to the Burgundian army just shortly before Margaret and Charles’ wedding. Ballard sees this expedition as evidence that Charles relied on English archers to fortify himself against a physical military threat, suggesting that his marriage served as a means to an end—the assurance that Edward would actually supply archers.\textsuperscript{210} Neither party, then, was trying to avoid conflict. In fact, it seems that they were trying to start it.

The Politics Behind Burgundian Marriage Ceremonies

Marriage treaties, chronicles, and papal dispensations have shown that Margaret and Charles’ wedding had the potential to spark conflict. Charles’ choice of whom to take as a third wife would determine his relationships with France and England. Yet the sources seem to show that Charles and Edward planned to strike first. But as we know, Warwick made the first move. While Warwick’s actions may have been an unforeseen consequence of Margaret and Charles’ marriage, accounts of the actual wedding ceremony suggest that the marriage had been arranged to provoke some response. Warwick and Louis’ alliance was formed to instigate a war against England, and so it seems that Edward and Charles relied on the rules of lawful violence to justify a war with France. It is thus likely that the marriage disworshipped Warwick and Louis in an attempt to rouse this response from them.

If the marriage disworshipped Warwick and Louis, then it needed to cause offense. The positioning of the couple’s wedding feast within Burgundian history, the symbolism behind the

spectacles, the people in attendance, and the worship that the festivities elicited from the audience reveal these efforts to offend Louis XI’s worship through enhancing the worship of Edward and Charles. Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage had offended Warwick in part because its secret nature amplified Warwick’s humiliation. Margaret and Charles’ marriage was different. It was a public affair. Yet as Wavrin’s account of Edward and Elizabeth’s marriage shows, the public nature of elite Burgundian weddings added to their political nature. Fortunately for historians, there are several accounts of the wedding ceremony. Scholars have used various methods to explore these accounts. In her biography of Margaret of York, Christine Weightman argues both for a political view of the marriage (as a way for Edward and Charles to defend themselves against the French) and for an economic view (which emphasizes the trade relations fostered by the match). Her biography stands out in the scholarship because she is one of the first people to describe the union as the “marriage of the century.” She derived this epithet from the attention it drew from contemporaries and from the several pages each writer dedicated to describing its festivities. Although Weightman viewed these revelries as a chance for Edward and Charles to show off their opulence and regality, her biography suggests that the wedding festivities were just as important as the marriage treaties. Her biography thus opened up the way for scholars to analyze the deeper meaning behind the festivities.

The marriage was divided into three parts: the bride completed her Joyeuse Entrée into Bruges, the ceremony was performed, and then feasts and tournaments followed the ceremony. Manuel Guay has examined the relationship between displays of affection and image-building


\[212\] Weightman, Margaret of York, 31; 38.
during the first half of the wedding ceremony. When the couple first met, Charles kissed Margaret and her ladies in waiting and then proclaimed that he would marry her. Marital affection was one of the criteria for a good marriage under canon law, and so Guay argues that the public displays of affection during this first meeting conveyed two messages. First, it confirmed the newly formed alliance between Burgundy and England, and second, it confirmed Charles’ role as a Christian ruler. Guay notes that the kiss took place “right in the middle of the city,” so everyone could see it. He argues that the public nature of this display “played a great role in [shaping] the image of the couple,” because it transmitted a message between the Duke and his subjects. The kiss showed that Charles adhered to the “norms imposed by the church” by following correct marriage procedures. Charles thus showed his subjects that he would be a capable leader who adhered to social and religious custom. Guay’s analysis emphasizes the importance of the Burgundian wedding festivities in demonstrating Charles’ ability to rule.

Geneviève Ribordy makes a similar assessment of Margaret and Charles’ wedding in her study of elite marriages in France. Like Weightman, Ribordy emphasizes the number of pages dedicated to the description of the wedding procession and banquet. But Ribordy explains more of the social meaning behind the festivities. She states that the couple’s marriage procession was important primarily because it “made the marriage known to all the members of the community,” and thus ensured that the marriage was accepted by Charles’ subjects and approved by the Church. She argues that the wedding banquet accomplished a similar purpose,

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218 Ribordy, *Faire les Nopces*, 121.
219 Ribordy, *Faire les Nopces*, 123, “le cortège est un élément social essentiel car il fait connaître le mariage à tous les membres de la communauté.”
because the long duration of the feast—ten days—signified the “prestige” of the couple and so demonstrated that Charles had the resources to lavishly entertain his guests. Like Guay, Ribordy highlights the importance of the celebrations in sending messages to others.

*Disworship* in the Wedding Festivities

The usage of visual cues to transmit meaning warrants further investigation into the banquet itself and into what these cues reveal about England’s part in the match. The Burgundian chronicler Olivier de la Marche provides the most detailed description of the festivities. De la Marche was in charge of the entremets. Entremets combined the “visual, culinary and performing arts,” and the term was often used to describe the table decorations and small entertainments performed in between each course, sometimes with small dishes served. De la Marche’s role in the planning makes it no surprise that his account of the feast focuses on the celebrations in elaborate detail. Although his connection to the feast may color his view of how splendid the festivities really were, his leadership role also makes him an authority on the meanings behind these entremets. Christina Normore has explored a few of these details to understand Margaret’s role in the marriage. She takes a “middle course” between studies of feasts in general and those focused on individual feasts to explore both the particularities of individual medieval banquets as well how each fit into Burgundian customs and values.

Normore echoes the arguments of Guay and Ribordy and states that the entremets of the first night “actively engaged with social norms to express very specific desires for the particular

220 Ribordy, *Faire les Nopces*, 128, “la durée d’une noce est le dernier élément de son prestige.”
new union being forged.” She focuses on what these entremets signaled to Margaret. While the festivities “display[ed] the consent of participants and witnesses” and so reinforced the legality behind the match, they also “transition[ed] the bride into a new set of social roles” and communicated the Burgundians’ expectations for their new duchess. The best example of this goal lies in the second entremet of the first night. A dwarf dressed as a shepherdess rode out on an individual dressed as lion and then the lion circled the room as he recited a song about virtue. Normore interprets this entremet as the Burgundians’ efforts to reinforce the virtuous and shepherdess-like character they desired Margaret to emulate.

But Normore also believes that the preceding entremet communicated another message about Margaret’s role in the marriage. During this entremet, actors playing “a unicorn” with “a cover bearing the arms of England” and a “leopard” who carried a “large banner of England” in one hand and “a marguerite” (daisy) in the other walked out to greet the guests. The leopard then presented the marguerite to Charles. This last detail puns on the French spelling of Margaret’s name, so Normore suggests that the scene was used to show the transfer of Margaret from her brother to her new husband Charles. The fantastical scene thus reflected the reality of Edward IV handing his sister Margaret over to the Burgundians. Normore’s interpretation of the entremet suggests that the marriage was primarily an alliance between the two principalities.

Yet a further exploration into the animals’ roles in bestiaries, heraldry, and Burgundian history reveals that the entremet also reflected the marriage’s role in disworshipping Louis XI. The leopard was significant in bestiaries and heraldic iconography. In bestiaries, the leopard

223 Normore, A Feast for the Eyes, 165.
224 Normore, A Feast for the Eyes, 172.
225 Normore, A Feast for the Eyes, 176-7.
227 Normore, A Feast for the Eyes, 178-9.
symbolized bastardy. Because of its link to bastardy, the dukes of Normandy and Guyenne adopted the leopard for their coat of arms. But the leopard was not always associated with bastardy in heraldry. Sometimes it was analogous to the lion. When the lion was depicted in the *passant gardant* position (facing the spectator, walking on all four paws) it was said to be acting like a leopard. So, the terms “leopard” or even “lion leopard” were used to describe the lion in this position. During his war with France, England’s King Edward III adopted the leopard as one of his heraldic badges. Caroline Shenton argues that Edward likely adopted the lion-leopard as his symbol, using the leopard-like position in depictions of the animal but using its lion-like characteristics to portray himself as just, courageous, and kingly. Shenton quotes a passage from a Latin poem which describes Edward’s feats at Crécy. In the poem, Edward is described as fighting “under the standard of the leopard of the English” (“Anglorum sub vexillo leopardi”). She notes that this phrasing portrays Edward himself as a leopard, closely linking the leopard symbolism to Edward’s ability to conqueror French territories.

This phrase about Edward III is similar to the wording used by de la Marche to describe the leopard at Charles and Margaret’s wedding feast. He calls the animal the “leopard of England” (“liepart d’Angleterre”). This phrase also relies on the genitive case to stress that the leopard symbolized Edward IV, who himself represented all of England. Yet again, by evoking the memory of Edward III, this image of England is of a conquering kingdom, one that

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succeeded in retaking its French territories. This interpretation also explains the connection between the leopard and Normandy, another French territory that vacillated between the two kingdoms. From the perspective of heraldry, then, the leopard at Margaret and Charles’ wedding feast presented England—with Edward IV as its head—as a conqueror of France.

More political symbolism is found in the leopard/unicorn combination. If the leopard at the wedding feast was meant to embody the characteristics of the lion, then the combination of the leopard and unicorn could also be a reference to artistic works and literature that featured a lion and a unicorn. Kristina Gourlay’s reinterpretation of *La Dame à La Licorne* tapestries emphasizes this connection in art. The series of fifteenth-century tapestries feature three prominent characters: a lion, a unicorn, and a woman. Gourlay rejects the traditional interpretation of the tapestries as representative of the five senses and instead argues that they were most likely wedding gifts representing the newly formed bond between husband (the unicorn) and wife (the woman).\(^{234}\) She bases this interpretation on the importance of the lion and the unicorn in chivalric romances. The unicorn was famed for its “strength and ferocity.”\(^{235}\) The lion embodied these qualities as well but also represented “fidelity and mercy.”\(^{236}\) Both animals thus imbibe the tapestries with themes of romance and chivalry. Likewise, Santiago López Martínez-Morás notes that the lion and unicorn were prominent characters in the *Roman de la dame à la licorne et le chevalier au lion*, a fourteenth-century chivalric romance, and so it is likely that the entremet at Margaret and Charles’ wedding feast used this work as its basis.\(^{237}\)

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\(^{235}\) Gourlay, “La Dame,” 54.

\(^{236}\) Gourlay, “La Dame,” 54-5.

this romantic context, the usage of these two characters is fitting for a wedding celebration that also featured tournaments and demonstrations of valor.

But as has been demonstrated in Edward’s marriage, this focus on love could also be sending a political message. The unicorn tapestries depict a triangular relationship among the woman, the lion, and the unicorn. The entremet at Margaret and Charles’ wedding also includes a triangular relationship. There is the unicorn, the leopard, and Charles to whom the marguerite is presented. This language of love evoked by the literary nature of the entremet suggests that the triangular relationship paralleled themes found in works like the Bestiaire d’amour. Notably, the leopard rides out on top of the unicorn, subjecting the unicorn to a submissive position. This detail is reminiscent of bestiary iconography of the unicorn and of the unicorn’s act of kneeling in the Bestiaire d’amour. It thus seems that the three characters in the entremet reflect the three characters in the Bestiaire d’amour. Charles represented Burgundy, the leopard of England represented Edward, and so, the unicorn could have been the third character in the struggle over Margaret and Charles’ marriage—Louis XI.

This interpretation of the entremet is likely given the symbolism behind the other festivities. These symbols position the feast within Burgundian history. Martínez-Morás also makes observations about the tapestries and the spectacles which suggest that the literary nature of the leopard and the unicorn also conveyed political messages. For Margaret and Charles’ wedding feast, the organizers chose to depict the feats of the Greek hero Jason in the tapestries and to have actors stage the twelve labors of Hercules for the remaining entremets. These choices seem unsurprising given the connection between the Order of the Golden Fleece and Jason. Notably, though, the same two heroes were used in the Vœu du Faison, the feast and tournament

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held by Charles’ father, Philip the Good, fourteen years beforehand. The usage was reversed with the feats of Jason being reenacted and images of Hercules on the tapestries. Martínez-Morás argues that since Olivier de la Marche was responsible for arranging both feasts, the second was made to imitate the first.239 This argument suggests that there was a certain connection between the feasts, opening up the possibility to interpret the visuals as representative of other feasts in Burgundy’s history.

The Vœu du Faisan has often been studied because Philip the Good used it to garner support for a crusade to take Constantinople. Marie-Thérèse Caron, however, interprets the banquet as an expression of Philip’s relationships with other dukes. She argues that the splendor of this feast demonstrated that “Duke Philip the Good was the only capable person to lead an expedition to the East,” enhancing his prominence among the other rulers present.240 Moreover, the oaths sworn by those in attendance signified “the[ir] submission to ducal will.”241 Philip thus used the banquet as a way to gather the other noblemen around him and reinforce his superior status.242 So Caron, too, views Burgundian feasts as a way of expressing the power of the duke.

But Philip’s banquet also holds particular importance in Burgundian history, because it did not quite end the power struggle. One nobleman, Louis of Luxembourg, the Count of Saint-Pol, did not take an oath; he saw himself as owing obedience only to the French king.243 Saint-Pol’s refusal to swear an oath was a clear insult to Philip, and so Philip avenged himself a few months later. In March, Saint-Pol hosted his own banquet termed “la Fête de la Licorne.” To his embarrassment, only two noblemen attended. Caron argues that Philip purposefully abstained

241 Caron, “17 février 1454,” 285, “il était surtout la manifestation d’une soumission à la volonté ducale.”
from the event and encouraged others to do so to show that he was not someone Saint-Pol wanted as his enemy. Caron’s analysis shows that Burgundian feasts were in dialogue with one another. What happened at one feast could affect others.

The connection between the Count of Saint-Pol and the unicorn provides important insight into what the unicorn represents at Margaret and Charles’ feast. The unicorn could be a reference to la fête de la Licorne and could contrast the failed fête with Charles’ very successful one. This interpretation, while seeming to present Saint-Pol as the object of ridicule, also suggests that Louis XI was an object of mockery. Martínez-Morás argues that the twelve labors of Hercules as acted out during the feast represent “the power of Charles and of his states opposite the French king.” He gives the example of Hercules fighting the two snakes which he believes represented Charles’ defeat of Louis in the War of Public Weal and in crushing a rebellion (aided by Louis) in Liège. I agree with this assessment but add that other details—particularly the unicorn—also reflect this assertion of power over Louis by stressing the power of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance. First, Philip the Good barred his supporters from attending Saint-Pol’s feast because the count had insulted him by pledging his loyalty to France rather than Burgundy. Philip’s refusal to attend Saint-Pol’s feast thus slighted Louis as much as it slighted Saint-Pol. By recalling this humiliation, Charles reminded his audience that the dukes of Burgundy knew how to vanquish their enemies. And by walking out holding a banner with the arms of England, the leopard and unicorn duo also suggested that Charles, with the aid of Edward, was prepared to defeat France again. This entremet was a call to arms and reminded the audience that Louis XI’s hoped-for alliance with England was shattered when Edward decided to

244 Caron, “17 février 1454,” 286. This story is recounted by the chronicler Mathieu d’Escouchy in Chronique, vol. 2, ed. G. du Fresne de Beaucourt (Paris, 1863), 160.
ally himself with Burgundy. Therefore, the entremet was not just an assertion of Charles’ power as duke of Burgundy but was also an assertion of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance’s power over France. The language of love surrounding the wedding festivities suggests that the wedding was more than just an alliance between England and Burgundy. It disworshipped Louis, because it attacked France’s position among other European principalities.

The people in attendance at Margaret and Charles’ feast also implies that the marriage disworshipped Louis. Caron notes that the French king was not at the Vœu du Faisan, another indication of Philip’s princely and powerful status.247 When describing the guests at Margaret and Charles’ wedding feast, de la Marche notes that several noblemen and women, kings, and princes were in attendance. Margaret had “forty or fifty” attendants who were “maidens and married ladies, more English than anything else,” and several English noblemen were also in attendance.248 The English made up a large portion of the audience, but de la Marche notes that there were also several foreign guests. Venetians were there. Florentines were there, including the “head” of the city, Thomas Portinari. The Spanish were there. The Genoese were there. And so were the “Ostrelins.”249 These regions all had trade connections with Burgundy, which could reinforce the economic nature of the alliance. But this description of the guests also highlights a striking absence—there are no representatives from France. Whether this is because Louis XI had not been invited or because he had declined an invitation we cannot know. If Louis had not been invited, then he had clearly been slighted. If he had refused to attend, then his absence emphasized that he opposed the match because it blocked his ability to ally himself with England. So, those in attendance reinforce the notion that Louis was now outmatched.

247 Caron, “17 février 1454,” 274.
248 Marche, Mémoires, 107; 111, “quarante ou cinquante femmes” and “estoient plusieurs dames et damoiselles, tant Angloises que aultres.”
249 Marche, Mémoires, 113-114. The Ostrelins are a group of northern Europeans who traded with the Burgundians.
Finally, we see an implied insult in the lavishness of the festivities. Much like de la Marche, John Paston III, who attended the wedding, focuses on the grandeur of the festivities. In a letter to his mother Margaret Paston, John writes that the princess Margaret was “receyvyd as worchepfully as all the world cowd devyse,” and that he had “no wyt nor remembrans to wyrte to yow, half the worchep that is her.”\(^{250}\) The use of the word “worchep” reveals that Paston’s impression was more than just awe for the magnificence of the feast. Paston believed that the magnificence was something to be worshipped, because it demonstrated that Charles knew how to play the good host. He was a good lord who had the resources to plan such a spectacle and who strove to entertain his subjects. The marriage celebrations thus allowed Charles to have his guests publicly recognize his \textit{worship} at the expense of Louis XI’s \textit{worship}.

So, the positioning of the feast within Burgundian history, the symbolism behind the entremets, the people in attendance, and Charles’ display of his own \textit{worship} reveals that multiple messages were conveyed to the audience. The most prominent message was that the Anglo-Burgundian alliance formed a much more powerful entity than France, and these principalities were willing to prove it. This claim to prestige attacked Louis XI’s own position as king of France and attacked France’s position within Europe. And so, de la Marche’s and Paston’s descriptions of the wedding festivities suggest that the marriage disworshipped Louis.

Since de la Marche wrote from a Burgundian perspective, his account of the wedding focuses on how the marriage disworshipped Louis XI. But the English writers focused on the increasing tension between Edward and Warwick and reveal that Margaret and Charles’ wedding also disworshipped Warwick. The most telling account is found in the second continuation of the Crowland Chronicle, the chronicle that began this thesis. Crowland was a Benedictine abbey in

\(^{250}\) \textit{The Paston Letters}, vol. 4, 298.
Lincolnshire, and the chronicle was composed in the fifteenth century during the events of the Wars of the Roses. The second continuation of the chronicle discusses the years 1459-1486, and Keith Dockray notes that the anonymous chronicler “had a real capacity for analysing rationally both the causes and consequences of events,” suggesting that he had experience as a diplomat and as a doctor of canon law.²⁵¹ So, the chronicler had a deep knowledge of English politics and was interested in analyzing the implications of events as they unfolded.

The chronicler’s knack for analysis is clearly seen in his description of the Anglo-Burgundian wedding. He sums up the marriage in the statement, “the marriage took place and was solemnized in the following July.”²⁵² This pithy description gives him room to explain how he interprets the match. He argues that “Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who for some years had appeared to favour the French” was “deeply offended,” because “the earl bore a bitter hatred” for Charles.²⁵³ This analysis focuses on the link between emotions and violence. There are three emotions in this description: favor (love/loyalty), offense, and hatred. Each plays a pivotal role in revealing how the marriage disworshipped Warwick.

First, the chronicler juxtaposes Warwick’s favor of the French with his hatred of Burgundy. This dichotomy explains the third emotion—offense. By concentrating on Warwick’s feelings towards these foreign rulers, the chronicler reveals that Edward’s decision to marry his sister to the Duke of Burgundy was averse, not just to Warwick’s political interests, but also to Warwick’s personal feelings. Warwick’s feelings of offense, then, reveal that he regarded the marriage as a personal attack. He believed that a wrong had been committed against him. To make this a true instance of disworship, though, Warwick’s political standing had to have been

seriously undermined. When the chronicler writes that “this marriage… was the real cause of
dissension between the king and earl,” he reveals that Warwick had indeed lost Edward’s favor
and his role as Edward’s advisor.\textsuperscript{254} Warwick had been disworshipped. And if Louis and
Warwick had both been disworshipped by the marriage, then that meant that they could reclaim
their \textit{worship} through violence.

CONCLUSION

Some of the arguments against the notion that the Anglo-Burgundian alliance was a direct attack on France are that Warwick still received land and honors up to 1469; Louis did not fully back Warwick’s revolt until 1470; when conflict did break out, Charles only provided aid at the very last second, and Edward seemed initially inactive during the first few stirrings of rebellion. These details could suggest that Warwick’s uprising was unplanned, and that Edward still regarded Warwick as an ally. They could even suggest that Warwick and Louis were not overly bothered by either Edward’s or Margaret’s marriages. Still, as is demonstrated by the protests of Richard, the Duke of York, in parliament and Isegrim the Wolf in the literary realm, the delay in a full-scale battle does not suggest that disworshipping Warwick and Louis had not been the original intention behind these two marriages. The persistency of York and Isegrim reveals that it could take multiple efforts to provoke one’s opponent to resort to battle.

Moreover, despite the delayed response, conflict eventually occurred. Interpreting both marriages as ways to disworship of the Earl of Warwick and Louis XI provides a plausible explanation for why this conflict erupted. In 1469, Warwick entered into an alliance with Edward and Margaret’s brother, George, the Duke of Clarence. The pair fled to Calais where Clarence married Warwick’s daughter Isabel. The two men first spread rumors about Edward’s misrule and the seditious influence his Woodville in-laws held over him. Their attempts to rally support in England were unsuccessful. The pair tried again in 1470, this time allying with Louis XI who encouraged an alliance between Warwick and Margaret of Anjou, the leader of the Lancastrian faction. Edward gained support from his brother-in-law in Burgundy who tried repeatedly to warn him of the Warwick-Louis alliance. England, France, and Burgundy were now all at war.

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256 These events are described in more detail in Ross, *Edward IV*, 126-77.
Edward’s initial inactive response to the conflict also supports the argument that the marriages disworshipped Warwick and Louis. The Burgundian chronicler Georges Chastellain writes that Edward remained inactive, but this response was a result of his “confidence” that “if he were able to find himself on the battlefield under Warwick’s barb, Warwick would not keep his footing” because Edward regarded Warwick as “weak and cowardly.” Charles Ross writes that this statement seems exaggerated or even untrue, yet in the context of disworship, it is not so surprising. If Edward believed that he could defeat Warwick on the battlefield, then trying to provoke Warwick to engage in battle would not seem so far-fetched. Within the structure of lawful violence, Edward had confidence that he would succeed in proving himself to have more worship and therefore be excused of blame.

The features of Warwick’s rebellion also suggest that it was a response to violence committed against him. The claim that Edward had been misled by the Woodvilles resembles the petitions of the Duke of York in parliament which sought to take the blame off of himself through reasserting his own worship and slandering the worship of his opponent. Other evidence that Warwick was trying to reclaim his worship lies in British Library Add. MS 48976. Around 1483, Anne Neville commissioned a genealogical roll of the Earls of Warwick. Anne was the youngest daughter of Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick. But unlike her father, Anne escaped death and married Edward IV’s brother Richard and eventually became queen. This genealogical roll is commonly referred to as the “Rous Roll” after its creator and possible scribe, John Rous. Much like the coronation roll that Edward commissioned in 1461, the Rous Roll relies on both

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257 Georges Chastellain, *Œuvres*, vol. 5, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhoven (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1864), 486, “car estoit tout certain, si une fois il se pouvoit trouver sur les champs en barbe de Warwyc, Warwyc ne tenroit point de pied, qui estoit lâche et couard.”

visual and written cues to create the illusion of continuity in the Neville lineage, starting with Guthelin, the mythic founder of Warwick.

Since the roll was commissioned around the time that Anne became queen, it is possible that, like the Philadelphia coronation roll, the Rous Roll was meant to legitimate Anne’s royal heritage. While it certainly emphasizes the connection between the Nevilles and the royal family, the description of Richard Neville suggests that the roll was also a way to do damage control for the family name. The roll describes Warwick as “a knyght of the garter” and states that he “had all England at hys ledyng and was dred and dowhtyd thorow many landis.”259 This description presents Warwick as a man who adhered to a chivalric code and as one who could command authority—these are key aspects of worship. And these details help cushion the blow of the next line which states that he was “deceuyd at his ende.”260 This statement is a reference to Warwick’s uprising. The word “deceuyd” acknowledges that Warwick’s rebellion was a mistake, yet it takes the blame off of Warwick by suggesting that someone else had manipulated him into overthrowing Edward.261 Additionally, the roll also states that “his knyghtly acts had be so excellent that his noble and famous name cowd neuer be put owt of laudable memory,” despite his rebellious actions.262 This statement reinforces the initial description of Warwick as a worshipful lord, and the wording follows a formula similar to the Duke of York’s pleas in parliament. The roll lists Warwick’s admirable qualities first, acknowledges that Warwick has been accused of treachery, takes the blame off of him by slandering someone else, and then concludes with a reaffirmation that he had the kingdom’s best interests at heart. This description shows an overall concern for Warwick’s worship.

259 British Library, Add. MS 48976 (online), f. 7br.
260 British Library, Add. MS 48976 (online), f. 7br.
261 Perhaps a reference to Clarence, Margaret of Anjou, or even Louis XI.
262 British Library, Add. MS 48976 (online), f. 7br.
Here we see that twelve years after Warwick’s uprising, the Neville family still felt the effects of Edward IV’s marriage. Having been humiliated by Edward’s secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville and having had his plans thwarted again by the marriage of Margaret of York and Charles, the Duke of Burgundy, Warwick rebelled. But his rebellion was a failed attempt to reclaim his *worship*. So, while the Rous Roll finally secured Warwick’s place as a powerful nobleman who had helped orchestrate the victories of various claimants to the throne, the fact that the roll needed to reassert Warwick’s *worship* meant that it had been lost. And as the roll suggests, it was damaged the most when Warwick tried to overthrow Edward with the help of France.

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Historians have often argued that the Wars of the Roses was a political contest between English noblemen and women who fought for control of the English crown. Although more recent scholars have argued that these actors fought in England’s and the monarchy’s best interests, this argument still suggests that disorder characterized much of the conflict. Moreover, love has been given as the most likely explanation for Edward IV’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. And an alliance has been given as the most likely explanation for Margaret’s marriage to Charles, the Duke of Burgundy. But a reexamination of Edward IV’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville and Margaret of York’s marriage to Charles, the Duke of Burgundy, nuances this conception of the Wars of the Roses. Neither of these previous interpretations fully explains Edward’s constant refusal to ally with France or Charles the Bold’s decision to ally with England. Interpreting these marriages as acts of violence rather than as instruments of love and alliance provides an answer to this question.
Historians have not disregarded the aid that France and Burgundy gave to these competing factions, yet they have not considered whether France also could have been the object of Edward’s desires. Richard, the Duke of York, made it clear in his bid for the throne in 1460 that he desired both the English and the French thrones. Genealogies made at Edward’s behest adopt this rhetoric, suggesting that he desired to carry out his father’s wishes to reclaim France. Given the events in the War of Public Weal, Charles was also eager to assert himself as a powerful duke on par with other European rulers. The imitation of his father’s banquet suggests that Charles copied his father’s efforts to reaffirm his power as duke. And both strategies reveal that these objectives could be obtained through war with France. Although the conflict created by Edward’s and Margaret’s marriages seems disorderly, there could have been a strategy to it. The rulers relied on the concept of disworship to enact violence on Warwick and Louis’ worship and so provoke a response from them. The disworshipping of these two men opened up the doors for war with France and gave Edward and Charles the opportunities to fulfill their desires without having to scramble for a justification. Perhaps they were taking a risk. But it was ultimately Warwick who paid the price.
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