Exploring the Character of a Fifteenth Century Knight: Literary and Historical Representations of William, Lord Hastings, from 1455 to Shakespeare.

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Abstract

William, Lord Hastings, is a central character in *Richard III*,[1] where his execution is the pivot point in Shakespeare's portrayal of the tyrant. Hastings is accused of treason - if true, Richard is vindicated, but if false, Richard has murdered an innocent man. Shakespeare's history plays cover the entire Wars of the Roses in a few hours, so his characterisation of Hastings is necessarily brief. The real Hastings is a more complex character, prominent for twenty years in the political machinations of the late fifteenth century. This study explores the evidence in a broad spectrum of sources: his own words in historical documents including letters, contracts and indentures, and literary texts from the medieval chronicles to the Tudor histories, leading to Shakespeare.

Hastings was integral to the kingship of Edward IV and rose to become Lord Chamberlain, Master of the Mint and Captain of Calais from a position of relative obscurity. As a parallel, it could be argued that Hastings was to Edward what Thomas Cromwell was to Henry VIII. This study focusses on the discovery of Hastings' character through contemporary literature and language and the use of form and style. It is interdisciplinary, describing and comparing the historical evidence alongside the literary portrayals. This allows an examination of Hastings' actions, personality traits, motivations and strategies, leading to a potential reinterpretation when compared to the dramatic characterisations as they emerge in the late fifteenth century onwards, culminating in Shakespeare.

[1] William Shakespeare. Hammond A. ed. *Richard III.* The Arden Edition. London: Methuen, 1981.

1: Introduction

William, Lord Hastings lived alongside the main protagonists in the Wars of the Roses. He is a loyal Yorkist and lifelong supporter of Edward IV, perhaps best known for his execution without trial by Richard III in 1483. Commentators on the reign of Richard III are polarised as to whether he was a good king or ruthless usurper. This new examination of William Hastings looks at the murky events of 1483 in the context of the portrayal of his character in the contemporary literature and the evidence that supports, disproves or nuances his dramatic persona. Does Shakespeare's characterisation of William, Lord Hastings, stand up to scrutiny in the light of this historical and literary evidence?

There is no complete biography of William Hastings (the most comprehensive being the ONDB),[2] but some aspects of his life have been studied in more detail.[3] He is mentioned in several literary texts including chronicles, private letters, memoires and in commentaries written contemporaneously or published just after his death. There are popular verses, songs, histories and dramas and they lead ultimately to the appearance of Hastings in two Shakespearean plays, *Henry VI Part III*[4] and *Richard III,* written some 100 years after the Wars of the Roses. As Tudor pieces, they have been labelled as propaganda, designed to denigrate the House of York. The discussion amongst historical scholars is fractious, with the 'Ricardian'[5] camp adopting diametrically opposed views to

[2] R. Horrox, *Hastings, William, first Baron Hastings (c. 1430-1483*), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
[3] For example: Theron Westervelt, 'William Lord Hastings and the Governance of Edward IV, with Special Reference to the Second Reign (1471-1483)'. PhD Thesis, Cambridge, 2001.
[4] Shakespeare, William. A. S. Cairncross, ed. *The Third Part of King Henry VI*. The Arden Shakespeare. London: Routledge, 1989.
[5] See: Richard III Society: www.richardiii.net

those handed down by Thomas More and Shakespeare. These arguments are well rehearsed when focussed on Richard III but can also be explored through the character of Hastings. Why is this important? It has never been proved that Richard III was responsible for the murder of the Princes in the Tower and possibly the only crime that we have evidence for is the execution without trial of Hastings.[6] Shakespeare uses this to fix Richard III as an 'evil tyrant' and to achieve this he must fix Hastings as his antithesis. This study evaluates the historical and literary evidence to show the complexity of Hastings' character in the context of the evidence, texts, morals and culture of the time.

An accomplished courtier, Hastings was appointed to important strategic posts – Lieutenant of the Calais Garrison, Lord Chamberlain and even Master of the Royal Mint. He had considerable influence, controlling access to the king, but was also a competent 'civil servant' as analysis of his time as Master of the Royal Mint will show. His own words give us an insight into his approach to such tasks, his motivations and even his leadership style. Hastings was a competent knight and jouster, his team competing against the king's own at Eltham. He fought alongside the Yorkists from the battle of Mortimer's Cross through to Barnet and Tewkesbury and was knighted by Edward IV on the battlefield at Towton in 1461. He accompanied Edward IV and Richard of Gloucester into exile in 1470 and some of the Burgundian cultural practices they encountered were introduced to the English court. He commissioned the beautiful book 'The Hastings Hours', now in the British Library,[7] and even brought over Flanders architects and craftsmen to build his castle at Kirby Muxloe, one of the first brick-built castles in England.

[6] This is contested by Annette Carson. *Richard, Duke of Gloucester as Lord Protector and High Constable of England*. Imprimis Imprimatur, 2015.
[7] Backhouse, Janet. *The Hastings Hours*. London: British Library, 1996.

His relationship with the Woodville faction is documented by Thomas More[8], amongst others. They were near neighbours in Leicestershire as Elizabeth Woodville's estates at Groby (where she lived as Lady Grey, prior to being widowed and becoming Edward IV's queen) are only 4 miles from where Hastings built his castle at Kirby Muxloe. The early years of this relationship are unrecorded, but Hastings did contract with Elizabeth to help recover her lands after her first husband died, and this is an important source in revealing Hastings' motives and character.[9]

Hastings enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame and fortune. He was in a position of considerable influence for over 20 years and a more astute and subtle political player than Shakespeare credits. When his career is considered, he may even be compared to other political figures who held similar positions – perhaps he was the Thomas Cromwell of his day? Sources differ and some reveal a different picture – one who pandered to Edward IV's demands and encouraged the excesses of the court with dubious morals. He may have a been a true knight in the chivalric tradition or a self-seeking courtier involved in political intrigues. Real historical figures differ from dramatic characters in that they are often more complex than performance time allows. Hastings is remarkably consistent in his lifelong loyalty to the House of York which acts as an umbrella over his other talents: military hero and strategist, diplomat, and affable confidante of the king.

This study focusses on the discovery of Hastings' character through contemporary literature and language and the use of form and style. It is interdisciplinary in that it

[8] R. S. Sylvester ed. *Thomas More: The History of King Richard the Third*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
[9] See Chapter 4

describes, where relevant, the historical context and evaluates the evidence in the texts where they point to Hastings' personality traits, motivations and strategies. This thesis is not intended as a full biography, but is limited to historical and literary texts from 1455 to 1597, from the chronicle of Gregory[10] to Shakespeare's *Richard III,* and with a focus on Hastings' character rather other aspects which have been studied in detail.[11] It is a multifaceted approach, looking at a broad spectrum of writing, starting with Hastings' own words before moving on to the words of others. Although chosen to illuminate aspects of Hastings' character, these texts also map to some extent the evolution of written works through the late fifteenth century. Hastings begins his career in the 'old' world of the medieval chronicles but loses his life when new genres of literature are emerging, culminating in the history plays of Shakespeare.

[10] Dan Embrell and Mary Teresa Tavormina. *The Contemporary English Chronicles of the Wars of the Roses*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019. 53-91.

[11] For example: Theron Westervelt, 'William Lord Hastings and the Governance of Edward IV, with Special Reference to the Second Reign (1471-1483)'. PhD Thesis, Cambridge, 2001.
William Huse Dunham. *Lord Hastings Indentured Retainers 1461-1483: Lawfulness of Livery and Retaining under the Yorkists and Tudors*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970. and
Theron Westervelt, 'The Changing Nature of Politics in The Localities in the Later Fifteenth Century: William Lord Hastings and His Indentured Retainers'. *Midland History* 26, no. 1 (2001): 96–106.

2: Review of the Sources and Literature

Primary Sources

The focus of this study is a range of historical and literary texts written during the late fifteenth century and on into the Tudor period. They have been chosen to give an evidential base and a multifaceted perspective, revealing Hastings as an emerging historical figure who develops into a more complex character in later works when he was portrayed by people who knew him. Although little survives in Hastings' own hand, there are letters and legal documents which reveal his approach to his public duties, his grasp of the diplomatic climate and his role at the centre of Edward IV's regime.

Hastings' early history is discovered through the body of medieval chronicles, which tended to record events as a journal, in chronological order. Major texts include Robert Fabyan's Great Chronicle of London,[12] the Crowland Chronicle,[13] and Gregory's chronicle,[14] which also illustrates the partisan view taken by some authors, for example in the portraying the behaviour of the Lancastrian forces,[15] which means that we cannot read these texts as historically accurate in the way that we might read an academic history today. They record battles as they happened, witnessed by the authors or the 'word on the street' if the chronicler could only depend upon hearsay. The chronicles are important in charting Hastings' rise from country squire to military hero and they are arguably one of the few windows into his early life and career. As his fame grows, Hastings

[12] Robert Fabyan. Thomas, A. H. and Thornley, I. D. eds. *The Great Chronicle of London*. Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1983.
[13] Pronay, Nicholas, and Cox, John, ed. *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459 - 1486*. London: Richard III and Yorkist History Trust, 1986.
[14] Embree and Tavormina. 53-91.
[15] Discussed in Chapter 3.

appears in popular ballads, such as *The Rose of Rouen,*[16] a celebration of Edward IV after the battle of Towton.

Larger chronicles spanned many years and had more than one author or continuator. Fabyan's chronicle, for example, is the source for the Shakespearean scene at the battle of Towton where a father kills his son and the son his father.[17] Fabyan's narrative is more extensive than Hall's,[18] suggesting that Shakespeare had access to the original version. There are also shorter chronicles focussed on one event or narrative such as the *First Battle of St. Albans*[19] or the *History of the Arrivall of Edward IV.*[20] Hastings is not mentioned in the first, although he may well have been present in York's army, but he plays a more significant role in the *Arrivall*, as the provider of troops for Edward. The chronicles progress from barely a mention of Hastings in the early battles to positioning him as one of the military heroes of the day, the loyal friend of the king executed without trial on Gloucester's way to the throne.

From a different perspective, Hastings' own words, in letters written fourteen years apart, are illustrative of his tactics and how he manages language and emotion to achieve his aims, revealing more depth to his character. As with the personal correspondence of families such as the Pastons, Stonors and Celys, these documents were never meant to be published and therefore give more informal insights. Edward L. Meek translated and

[16] Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913. 247-8.
[17] *3 Henry VI*. 57-59.
[18] Hall, Edward. *Hall's Chronicle, 1809.* London: Forgotten Books, 2022. 256.
[19] Embree and Tavormina. 93-96.
[20] Embree and Tavormina. 157-191.

published *The Calais Letterbook*[21] in 2017, a primary source for Hastings' role as a strategist and diplomat. Hastings left few handwritten texts, but a letter from the first reign of Edward IV survives, written in French at Fotheringhay in 1463.[22] The language and content of this letter compared to *The Calais Letterbook* illustrates Hastings' role in international affairs and his own words illuminate his character.

Also in his own words, selected legal documents, including his will, reveal the legacy he wanted to leave behind. A paragraph from a marriage contract points to an intriguing angle on Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville.[23] A legal indenture outlines the procedures to be followed during the recoinages when Hastings held the office of Master of the Mint as well as Lord Chamberlain - two significant administrative posts comparable to modern Heads of Department. The indenture is a project plan that would be at home in the civil service today, given the detail and diligence with which the operational procedures are structured. These texts establish Hastings' capabilities, approach and attitude to the duties entrusted to him and his central role in Yorkist economic policy.

As the second half of the fifteenth century progressed, authors were beginning to adopt new forms, and the *Memoirs*[24] of Philippe de Commynes are by an author who knew Hastings and wrote from personal experience. It is an early biography and deals not just with a diary of events in the style of the chronicles, but makes observations about

[21] Edward L. Meek, ed. and trans. *The Calais Letterbook of William Lord Hastings (1477) and Late Medieval Crisis Diplomacy 1477-83*. Donington: Richard III and Yorkist History Trust, 2017.
[22] William, Lord Hastings. *Letter from William Hastings to Lord Lannoy. Fotheringhay, 1463.* Biliothèque Nationale de Paris. *MS. Français 6970, f. 361* Translation found in Appendix A.
[23] Listed as part of the Hastings Manuscripts in the Huntington Library, but currently lost. Paragraph from George Smith, *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*. London, Ellis. 1935. 31.
[24] Philippe de Commynes. Michael Jones ed. *The Memoirs of Philip de Commines, Lord of Argenton: Containing the Histories of Louis XI.* London: Penguin Classics, 1972.

motivations, values, philosophies and includes Commynes' opinions of the characters portrayed and snapshot of Hastings the man. Commynes met Hastings in Burgundy during the exile of 1470. He presents himself as Hastings' friend, and portrays him as a noble man, retelling the story of Hastings refusing to give a receipt because he does not want to be known as Louis XI's pensioner, causing the French king to regard Hastings as the most honourable of all Edward IV's servants. This episode is written with humour and warm regard. We might today suspect Hastings is accepting a 'brown envelope', but Commynes considers this a sign of nobility consistent with the conventions of the time.

From this point, Hastings becomes more famous for his death than for his life, and so the account of Dominico Mancini, an eyewitness to the events of 1483, is crucial. Mancini, an Italian cleric, set down his account in the December of that year. His *Usurpation of Richard III*,[25] was originally given as an oral performance when he returned to France. He is the first to give a detailed account of the death of Hastings and the mood in London at the time, from his own observation, street gossip and contemporary sources such as Dr. John Argentine, the physician to Edward V in the Tower. Mancini's text was not discovered until 1934, and hence was not available to key biographers such as Scofield.[26] However, it is the basis for the story told as a drama by Thomas More,[27] and which becomes the literary inheritance that Shakespeare carried into the history plays. More is the most important source for the characters found in Shakespeare. There are many similarities to

[25] Domenico Mancini. Charles A. J. Armstrong ed. *The usurpation of Richard the Third: = De occupatione Regni Anglie per Riccardum Tercium libellus*. Gloucester: Sutton, 1989.
[26] Cora L. Scofield. *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth: King of England and of France and Lord of Ireland*. 2 Vols. Oxford: Fonthill, 2016.
[27] Thomas More. R. S. Sylvester. R. S. ed. *Thomas More: The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

Mancini, and the copy found in 1934 appears to have belonged to a friend of More, so he could have used it as a source before the manuscript was lost for centuries. Tillyard thought that 'the effect of More's history was very great and largely incalculable ... I would guess that it not only set the pattern of Shakespeare's *Richard III* but was a direct incitement to him to write dramatically rather than anecdotally.'[28] This acknowledges More as the key source (regurgitated in Grafton, Hall, Holinshed and *The Mirror for Magistrates)*[29] but also his importance as dramatic literary forms develop in the Tudor period.

The implication of studying Hastings through this wide variety of texts is that it establishes a rounded persona, providing a yardstick against which to measure Shakespeare's portrayal. The primary texts are not exhaustive. Many historical records were destroyed, so it is unlikely that we will ever have a definitive account of the events of 1483. Many are missing. Why, for example, are Hastings letters from Calais preserved and yet seemingly none of his other letters? There is surely more to be discovered, perhaps in other European archives, which might build on the character evidenced here.

[28] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Peregrine Books, 1962. 39.
[29] Scott Lucas, ed. *A Mirror for Magistrates: A Modernized and Annotated Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Academic Study

There is no complete biography, and previous studies have focussed on the military aspects of the Wars of the Roses,[30] or on detailed aspects of fifteenth century politics, environment or culture. Westervelt,[31] explored Hastings' role in government and the political environment. Carpenter[32] charted Hastings' land holdings and transactions as part of the wider community in Warwickshire. W. H. Dunham[33] charted the affinity of indentured retainers assembled by Hastings in the Midlands, binding a large number of followers who could be called upon for support in military action in return for his 'good lordship'. This reflected a structural change to the old feudal model, as described by Michael Hicks[34] in his work on bastard feudalism, and its importance was outlined by D. A. L. Morgan[35] in changing the nature and power base of the monarch. Morgan demonstrated that power shifted when Edward IV built a military force based on his household, rather than the traditional power of the nobility. By moving to this 'household' model, Edward ensured that he could not be challenged again by an over-powerful noble, such as the Earl of Warwick. Hastings was also made Lieutenant of Calais in 1471, thus controlling the only permanent professional army. David Grummit[36] explored Hastings' time in Calais and his importance in the politics of Yorkist England.

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[30] E.g. Philip A. Haigh, *The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses*. Stroud: A. Sutton, 1995.

[31] Theron Westervelt, 'William Lord Hastings and the Governance of Edward IV, with Special Reference to the Second Reign (1471-1483)'. PhD Thesis, Cambridge, 2001.

[32] Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

[33] W.H. Dunham, 'Lord Hastings Indentured Retainers 1461-1483', *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences,* 39 (1955): 117-34. This is further explored in I. Rowney, 'The Hastings Affinity in Staffordshire and the Honour of Tutbury', *BIHR*, 57 (1984), 35-45 & 'Resources and Retaining in Yorkist England: William, Lord Hastings and the Honour of Tutbury', in *Property and Politics: Essays in Late Medieval English History*, ed. A.J. Pollard (1984), 139-55. Gloucester, Sutton. 1984.

[34] Michael A. Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*. The Medieval World. (London: Longman, 1995).

[35] D. A. L. Morgan. 'The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th, 23 (1973): 1–25.

[36] David Grummitt, 'William, Lord Hastings, the Calais Garrison and the Politics of Yorkist England'. *The Ricardian* 12, no. 153 (2002): 262–74.

Historians have positioned Hastings as a powerful military leader – the extent of his affinity matched only by Gloucester's power base in the North. It is a game-changer during the battles of the Wars of the Roses and still influential when faced with the inter-regnum following the death of Edward IV. This study does not attempt to re-evaluate these works, but to refer to them primarily where they add to the understanding of Hastings' character.

For biographical detail, Rosemary Horrox's entry in the ODNB[37] is a comprehensive starting point, alongside the major biographies of Edward IV. Cora Schofield[38] recognised Hastings as a key advisor and influencer of Edward IV, and this is echoed by Charles Ross:

> Of all Edward's councillors, none stood closer to him personally than Sir William Hastings. Their relationship was based on mutual trust and affection and compatibility of taste. Royal confidence in Hastings was repaid by a lifetime of personal devotion. Hastings left behind him an enviable reputation for loyalty and uprightness.[39]

By and large, historians have admired Hastings. Christine Carpenter describes him as a 'man of impeccable loyalty, even unto death',[40] which is entirely consistent with the character that appears in *Richard III*. After Shakespeare, Hastings appears as a literary character in plays about Jane Shore and modern day historical novels. These show a continued interest in his part in history, but they do not add to the evidence base for his

[37] Rosemary Horrox, 'Hastings, William, First Baron Hastings (c. 1430–1483), Courtier and Administrator'. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1 March 2023. https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12588.
[38] 'The influence which Hastings exercised over his royal master was fully understood by the king of France as well as by the Duke of Burgundy, and as Charles was already paying the chamberlain a thousand crowns a year, Louis promised him two thousand a year.' Scofield. Vol 2: 146.
[39] Charles Ross. *Edward IV*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1974. 75.
[40] Christine Carpenter. *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c. 1437-1509*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 160.

character. This study does not, therefore, consider material written after the first performance of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, but keeps an eye on any emerging historical discoveries.

In terms of literary criticism, the field is scant, with appraisers of the Shakespearean history plays often dismissing Hastings as a peripheral figure.[41] The way Shakespeare represents Hastings depends largely on his purpose in writing the play, and the context of Elizabethan England at that time. Agnes Heller[42] uses Hastings to illustrate her notion of the 'bar of evil'. As *Richard III* progresses, the 'bar' is raised, and also the dramatic tension – even though the audience knows what is going to happen. The 'bar' is explained as a key attribute of the tyrant:

> The tyrant who sits in the center is also a trainer; everyone within the circle has to practice springing over a vaulting bar. The bar is set higher and higher, since greater crimes need to be committed or approved. This is a moral test for the tyrant's men, although not for the decent men for they do not even try to jump over the lowest bar..... Four of Richard's men jump over this bar: Hastings, Buckingham, Catesby and Richard himself. But then the bar, the moral stake, is put higher. Now the princes, the sons of King Edward of York, have to be sent to the Tower. They must be disinherited, and Richard put in their place. Hastings hesitates; he does not spring over this bar, and thus he will be executed.[43]

[41] e.g., 'A foolish man, Hastings believes that he can choose not to support Richard and keep his head'. Rebecca Warren, *Richard III, William Shakespeare: York Notes Advanced*. Harlow: Longman, 2001. 69.
[42] Agnes Heller, *The Time Is out of Joint: Shakespeare as Philosopher of History*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.
[43] Heller, 264.

Heller does not excuse Hastings - after all, he was involved in the death of Prince Edward at Tewkesbury – the lowest bar. She sees him as an essentially decent man who believes that his friendship with Richard will protect him. She concludes:

> Hastings finally faces the truth, the simple truth all lovers of tyrants who will become their victims will and must at last discover.[44]

In the context of the drama, Hastings is the decent man, even though Richard accuses him of being a conspirator. He holds a morality mirror up to Richard, even though no writer pretends that he is perfect or saintly. Not all critics see the play or its characters in this way. Harold Bloom[45] thought Shakespeare was not too bothered about the historical facts, but that 'the Tudor cartoon' of the character of Richard was the basis of the play. This representation of 'two-dimensional' cartoon characters might well hold true for Hastings, but there is surely more depth to Richard.

There is an alternative historical view, that Hastings was involved in a conspiracy and hence his execution by Richard was justified and lawful. In 2005, Annette Carson[46] published an analysis of the legal duties of Richard of Gloucester as High Constable of England. Carson asserts that Gloucester was within his rights to execute Hastings as a traitor without trial but does not give the evidence for treason. Philippa Langley[47] has taken the letter written by Gloucester to the City of York requesting assistance on 10th June 1483 as evidence that a plot had been uncovered. Although this refers to the moves

[44] Heller, 266.
[45] Harrold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. London: Fourth Estate, 1999. 66.
[46] Annette Carson, *Richard, Duke of Gloucester as Lord Protector and High Constable of England*. Horstead: Imprimis Imprimatur, 2015. 71-73.
[47] Philippa Langley, *The Princes in the Tower - Solving History's Greatest Cold Case*. Cheltenham: The History Press, 2023.

made by the Woodvilles,[48] Langley has suggested that Hastings could have been involved in the Woodville plot or a separate initiative. Her evidence is taken from Mancini, who says that, on 13th June, 'men had come with concealed weapons so that they could be the first to unleash a violent attack'.[49] There are two possibilities – either Hastings had set a trap for Gloucester and carried concealed weapons into the council meeting, or Richard made this accusation as part of his ploy to trap Hastings. Both views question Hastings' character, and the Shakespearean treatment. If Hastings was involved in a plot, it could be seen as self-interest, treachery, or loyalty, depending upon the view of the reader - medieval or modern, Lancastrian or Ricardian.

This study aims to discover aspects of Hastings' character which might illuminate the background to these questions. In the first section, Hastings' own words build a picture of the man before looking at his portrayal by other writers. A shrewd diplomat, his letters from 1463 and 1477 are remarkably similar in tone and emotion, with almost passive-aggressive indignation. A shrewd business brain is behind the marriage contract with Elizabeth Woodville and a competent administrator behind the operating procedures at the Tower of London during the recoinage, showing his role in economic policy which enabled Edward IV to mend the country's finance. He reinforces his own reputation in his will, stressing his service to the crown over twenty years, his loyalty to Edward IV and, importantly, Edward V to follow. Hastings' portrayal by other writers evolves through the parallel evolution of literary forms as the fifteenth century progresses. Factual accounts in the medieval chronicles lead to more personal accounts by people who knew him in the

[48] Langley, 357.
[49] Mancini, 63.

biography of Commynes and the eyewitness account of Mancini. Thomas More's dramatic history paves the way for Shakespeare, and the rounded persona established by all these selected texts is then used as a backdrop to an analysis of Hastings' role in the drama of *Richard III*.

3: Hastings in his Own Words – Diplomatic Letters

There are few surviving texts in Hastings's own hand. Two manuscript collections exist: one in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France dating from 1463, mostly fragments,[50] and the later body of work known as the Calais Letterbook, part of the Hastings Manuscript Collection[51] in the Huntington Library, dating from 1477. These letters are critically important for an understanding of the basis of his character - his values, attitude, education, and an understanding of his approach to foreign affairs and strategy. Written fourteen years apart, the two sets of letters reflect turbulent periods when Hastings was at the heart of the politics of the time. Unpicking the diplomatic 'code' in these letters reveals his tactics as he deploys stock phrases contrasted with emotional outbursts to achieve his objectives.

My translation of the 1463 letter, written to Jean de Lannoy, an envoy of the duke of Burgundy,[52] is included in Appendix A. The Calais letters are addressed to the Louis XI of France and his other officials, including the Admiral of France. Translated by Edward L. Meek,[53] they are not official diplomatic documents, bringing formal communication from the king of England. They serve the diplomatic purpose in other ways, relaying information between officials, envoys, and acquaintances with a little more expression, informality and emotion than in formal documents. Towards the end of 1477, Louis XI

[50] *Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, MS. français 6970, f. 361*
[51] *Huntington Library, San Marino. Hastings MS. 13886*
[52] Hugues de Lannoy was an envoy to Henry VI in July 1433. Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages*. London: Hambledon and London, 2003. 209.
[53] Meek. *The Calais Letterbook*.

corresponds directly with Hastings as the diplomatic tension rises and the intrigue intensifies, illustrating how central he has become to Edward's foreign policy.

1: Letter from William Hastings to Lord Jean de Lannoy 7th August 1463

The most substantial surviving letter was written by Hastings from Fotheringhay, where he was staying with the king, on 7th August 1463. It was transcribed as an appendix to Scofield's biography of Edward IV.[54] Following victory at Towton in 1461, Edward IV returned to London to be crowned king and Hastings was rewarded for his military prowess and appointed Lord Chamberlain, which meant that he was constantly in Edward's presence. However, Lancastrians held on to several strongholds, and this period, known as the 'war in the north' was particularly fractious, with castles changing hands and nobles changing sides on a regular basis. Edward IV travelled to Durham to join the battle but was struck down with the measles and returned south, with Hastings by his side. The Earl of Warwick and his brother, Lord Montagu, led the recovery of the castles held by the Lancastrians, laying siege to Alnwick, Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. It is clear that Hastings was present for some of this period as he received the surrender of Alnwick castle in 1462.[55] It was left to Warwick and Montagu to mop up the Lancastrian forces, including the siege at Norham Castle which is cited by Hastings in his letter of the 7th of August 1463. It was against this turbulent backdrop that this letter was written.

[54] Scofield. Vol 2, Appendix 1, 461.
[55] Haigh. 71.

The letter is written in French, and its format displays a knowledge of the protocols of diplomatic '*lettres missives*'. This tells us that Hastings was at least bilingual and knew '*ars dictandi*'.[56] It is likely that he received his education in the household of Richard, Duke of York. It is not clear if Hastings had met Lannoy in person at this point, but he does address him in warm, if formulaic, terms:

> Tres honoré seigneur, apres toute due et cordiale recommendation avec tres affectueux et especial desir d'estre souvent acertené de vostre bonne et honorable prosperité et santé.' [Most honoured Sir, after all due and cordial recommendations, with very affectionate and special desire to be frequently assured of your good and honourable prosperity and health].

Hastings goes on to say that it is clear Lannoy has not received some of his letters[57]

> don't suis tres deplaisant, et que semblablement m'avez rescript plusieurs lettres et de Nouvelles par icelles que la pluspart ne sont venues a ma connaissance [about which I am most displeased, and that similarly that you have written back several letters, and that news from there for the most part has not come to my attention].

This sets the indignant tone of the letter, but it is not unusual in diplomatic terms as this phraseology had been used in the preceding centuries.[58] Hastings displays a sense of outrage at the breach of diplomatic protocols, implying that Lannoy should 'read between the lines'. The missing letters also excuse Hastings from telling Lannoy when the ambassadors to St. Omer will be sent, allowing him to evade the question.

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[56] Chaplais, 114.
[57] 'il semble que diverses lettres que vous ay envoieés ne vous ont pas eté delivree'
[58] In 1324, Raymond Subiran complained 'rumour has it that letters are being opened by the French keepers of passage'. Chaplais. 75.

Hastings launches into a tirade of criticism against the Lancastrians. He refers to the siege of Norham Castle, and notes disparagingly that Henry VI, 'Henry, soy appellant Roy', [who calls himself king], aided by his wife Queen Margaret and the Queen of Scotland, was defeated by Warwick despite all their heavy artillery 'et au default de … Chevalerie'. Hastings reports that the Lancastrian forces acted with a lack of chivalry, echoing passages from the chronicles, for example Gregory noting the unchivalrous behaviour of the Lancastrian forces after the Rout of Ludford Bridge:

> That men went wete-scode in wyne, and then they robbyd the towne, and bare awaye beddynge, clothe, and othyr stuffe, and defoulyd many wym-men.[59]

Hastings is using the expectation that his letters will be read by spies, to plant misinformation and propaganda. He writes that Margaret and her allies lost to the Earl of Warwick, even though he was fighting with just the people of the Scottish borders, thus emphasising the inferiority of her forces. To finish, the 'Roy d'Ecosse avec son pouvoir fuyant de peur', [The King of Scotland with his armies fled from fear], indicates that the Scottish king did not display chivalric bravery, again contrasting with the Yorkists. This bravado is designed to reassure the Burgundians but demoralise any Lancastrian readers. It shows Hastings as an astute politician.

Hastings also refers to Lord Piers de Brezé, a military commander seconded to Queen Margaret by the French king, implying that he is equally ineffective against Warwick and signalling to Louis XI that Edward is not afraid of him either. This is described in the phrase

[59] Embrell and Tavormina, 67.

'n'en poy effrayé Mond. Souverain seigneur cependant estant en ses desports et esbatemens en la chasse'. They are unable to frighten his sovereign Lord who is at leisure and engaged in hunting. Why does Hastings include this snippet of information? Scofield notes 'it was a superfluous piece of information to send to Lannoy, who was probably surer of the fact than Hastings himself', hence its purpose must be propaganda, reassuring for Burgundy and unsettling for France.[60]

In truth, the situation was still precarious with both castles and nobles changing sides until the end of 1464, although Hastings is trying to mask this turbulence with his confident tone. The continuing military campaign also delayed the Earl of Warwick, expected at the diplomatic negotiations at St. Omer. Lannoy is pushing to find out when the negotiators would arrive, but Hastings portrays a lack of concern or urgency on the part of the king, as if the military situation in the north was an inconvenience which would soon be resolved. Historians have questioned Edward's lack of action both in the north and later during the crisis of 1477.[61] It may well be that, in 1463, Edward was still suffering from the measles, so Hastings is at pains to point out his good health and the hunting reference may suggest a cover up. Michael K. Jones goes further, considering that the 'king's laziness, and reluctance to take decisive action, may have been alluded to by Hastings as early as 1463'.[62] Although Jones' comment is retrofitted to support his position over the 1477 crisis, there is a suspicion that Hastings is putting a spin on a situation where Edward is possibly ill and potentially not in full control of the kingdom.

[60] Scofield, Vol 1. 300.
[61] Jonathan Hughes, *Arthurian Myths and Alchemy: The Kingship of Edward IV*. Stroud: Sutton, 2002. 275.
[62] Michael K. Jones, '1477 – The Expedition that Never Was: Chivalric Expectation in Late Yorkist England', *The Ricardian*, xii, no. 153. 2001. 275-292.

For a Lancastrian, reading this letter at face value would be demoralising. Hastings goes on to say that Lord Montagu has put to flight the Scottish king who has been utterly humiliated with many prisoners taken, and that raiding has taken place across the border resulting in the destruction of Scottish lands and properties, with many Scots killed. He expects the Scots to regret supporting the Lancastrians and to finish he wishes:

> que leurd. repentance n'est ingoreé toute parfait, j'espere que de brief elle prendra tel effect et conclusion que sera a memorance a la perpetuelle desolation et misere de la nation des Ecossois a grace de Dieu, [Their (Henry and Margaret) repentance will not be considered perfect, and I hope that it will soon take effect and in conclusion be a reminder of the perpetual desolation and misery of the Scottish nation, by the grace of God.]

He is cursing Henry, Margaret, and the Scots for their support of the Lancastrians.

What does this letter tell us about Hastings himself? Ostensibly, he is relaxing with the king at Fotheringhay, as the king's right-hand man. It is not a formal diplomatic letter but shows Hastings' level of education, using protocol to get his message across and his acumen as a propagandist. He reassures Lannoy that the English ambassadors are on their way to St. Omer, despite the delay. Conversely, Lancastrian spies reading this letter would hear of devastating defeats – whilst Edward is hunting and enjoying himself. The propaganda is enhanced by the use of emotive language. Hastings is indignant that his letters have gone astray and that the Lancastrians have acted in an unchivalrous manner. Henry VI is referred to as a 'self-proclaimed king', rather than one who has ruled for many years, implying that Edward IV is the right and chivalrous king. He ends with the damning

curse that calls for the perpetual desolation and misery of the Scottish nation, positioning Edward on the side of God and the Lancastrians on the side of evil.

The letter shows that Hastings sets high store by the chivalric code, the protocol of diplomacy and the power of Warwick's forces, victorious because they represent the just cause. He uses references to these high moral values to mask what is really going on – Edward is not present on the battlefield. He warns Lannoy that their letters are being intercepted because he wants to paint a picture of the defeated Lancastrians with their sympathisers, especially Louis XI. He is protective of Edward, showing his loyalty. He is a shrewd operator, assessing the political situation and using the letter as a vehicle of propaganda. He is not beyond emotional outbursts or exaggeration in order to build his picture and he understands the value of public relations.

2. The Calais Letterbook of 1477

Fourteen years after his letter to Lord Lannoy, Hastings compiled a letterbook consisting of fifteen surviving letters, Hastings' own notes and two credences[63] for his envoys Lord Rochechouart and William Laverock. He also included the credence of Olivier le Roux, the envoy of Louis XI. Written in Calais from April to September 1477, they chart the fervent diplomatic activity following the sudden death of Charles, Duke of Burgundy in January 1477. The act of compiling this letterbook is interesting in itself. There are so few documents in Hastings' own hand that the survival of these papers, including his own notes, must be intentional. In Calais, he was removed from the king, so perhaps felt that

[63] Diplomatic instructions

he should record all his own letters to show to Edward at a later date. Hastings had not, to our knowledge, recorded his actions in this way before, so we can view the letterbook almost as a 'case for the defence' if he were to be challenged on any of his actions, which he might have anticipated. The letterbook was kept with his family papers as a personal record, rather than lodged alongside official diplomatic correspondence in the royal archives. Whatever his motivation, it shows that Hastings was alive to the sensitive nature of the situation and how his actions might be judged in the midst of this period of fervent activity. He is recording and justifying his actions, managing his own reputation and historical legacy.

Two years before the Calais letterbook, Edward had led a military expedition to France, but signed a peace treaty with Louis XI at Picquigny, without any battles being fought. The treaty was not universally popular, but it did stabilise the royal finances. Louis paid Edward a pension of 50,000 crowns a year and Hastings received an annual pension of 2,000 crowns[64], so had a personal pecuniary interest in the treaty. Many soldiers had wanted to fight, and some stayed on in the Burgundian army.[65] Throughout his reign, Edward had styled himself 'King of England and of France and Lord of Ireland'.[66] He had arrived in France in 1475 with much fanfare but been 'bought off' by the French king. In the late fifteenth century, when chivalric principles were highly regarded, Edward had been seen as the model chivalric king, and the capitulation must have brought a sense of anti-climax for his fighting men.

[64] Charles Ross. *Edward IV*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1974. 233-4
[65] Edward L. Meek, 'The Career of Sir Thomas Everingham, 'Knight of the North', in the service of Maximillian, duke of Austria, 1477-81'. *Historical Research*, Vol. 74, 184, 2001. 238-248
[66] Schofield. Title page.

In 1477, Louis XI, took the opportunity of the death of Charles of Burgundy to try to capture his lands. This created a crisis of foreign policy for Edward – should he honour his treaty with Louis, keep his money and safeguard his daughter's marriage to the Dauphin, or respond to requests for assistance from his sister, Margaret, the widow of Charles? As Meek comments:

> Hastings was in a very delicate position, at a time of diplomatic and military flux. He had a fundamental task to ensure the safety of English strategic and commercial interests in Calais, although his actions and decisions at Calais also had the potential to threaten the delicate balance of Edward IV's foreign policy.[67]

Outwardly, Hastings maintained Edward's policy of 'wait and see', holding to the Treaty of Picquigny and peace whilst in all probability privately considering that Margaret should be assisted. Louis made a land grab, which not only threatened the stability of the region, but it also threatened England's territory at Calais. This meant that Hastings had to maintain the threat (in Louis' eyes) that Edward might join forces with Burgundy, whilst trying to maintain all the provisions of the Treaty. It was a balancing act. Matters deteriorated when Louis' forces surrounded Boulogne, which was only 20 miles from Calais. On 13th February, the severity of the situation was reflected by John Paston II:

> yisterdaye beganne the grete cowncell to whyche all the aststys of the londe shall com to, butt iff it be for gret and resonable excesis. And I suppose the cheffe cawse of this assemblé is to comon what is best to doo now vppon the grete

[67] Meek. 26

> change by the dethe off the Duke of Burgoyne, and for the kepyng off Caleys and the Marchys, and for the preseruacion off the amytéys taken late and weell wyth Fraunce as now wyth the membrys off Flaundrys; wher-to I dowt nott ther shall be jn all hast both the Dukys off Clarance and Glowcestre.[68]

It seems that not only was Calais to be defended, but that the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester would be entering the fray in defence of the Burgundians. Paston, who served with Hastings in Calais, expected that Hastings 'shall hastely goo to Caleys with grete company'[69] to reinforce the Calais garrison and repel any assault. In 1471, Hastings had taken 1,500 men of his own affinity to Calais as well as 200 men from the previous Warwick garrison force.[70] In 1477, he took an additional 'twenty-six mounted men-at-arms... forty-one mounted archers...'[71] but not a massive new invasion force. He also reinforced the physical defences, with building materials being shipped from England.[72] On the face of it, the intent was defensive. By April, Hastings and company had arrived and the Calais correspondence begins, set against the backdrop of this diplomatic crisis.

The first four letters were written to the Admiral of France.[73] On 13th April, it is clear that correspondence was underway, Hastings having already received a letter from the Admiral 'by his trumpet'.[74] This may not be a throw-away line as there was a history of household musicians acting as spies, reports Ian Arthurson.[75] Hastings could be signalling

[68] James Gairdner. ed. *The Paston Letters.* Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983. Vol 5. 270.
[69] Gairdner. 270.
[70] Grummitt. *Calais Garrison.* 262–74.
[71] Grummitt. 267.
[72] Meek. 38.
[73] The Admiral of France was Louis de Bourbon, illegitimate son of Charles I, Duke of Bourbon and known as the *bâtard de Bourbon.* Meek. 5. n.29
[74] Meek. 89.
[75] 'The 'Trumpet' occupied an important position in orders of chivalry ... they were intimate with those in power and possessed skills – mathematical and musical – which lent themselves to espionage.' Ian

that he suspects the messenger is a spy. These four early letters contain almost no information but focus on the pleasantries of diplomatic protocol, setting a tone of mutual co-operation and respect. Hastings is buying time to see how the crisis will play out, preparing his forces in Calais and also deciding on his own tactics. He deploys these pleasantries as a blocking tactic under this guise of friendliness, 'je vous prie que me tenez pour excuse que ne puis appoincter lieu.... par ensemble selon vostre desir. Car j'ay tells charges à present que d'icy ne puis partir encores en aucun manière.'[76] ['I pray you excuse me for being unable to appoint a place for us to meet as you desire. I have such duties here at present that I am unable to leave in any way']. This harks back to the diversionary tactics Hastings used in his letter to Lannoy in 1463. It reinforces his mission as the defence of Calais, which is taking all his attention. Hastings is all sweetness and light about the situation – offering 'Mais s'il est chose que puisse faire pour le bien de matières continues en vosdites lettres, ou pour vous, je m'y emploiray de bon cueur.'[77] ['But if there is anything that I might do for the good of the matters contained in your said letter, or, for you, I will do it gladly.'][78] These are stock phrases of diplomatic correspondence. Edward's policy is to do nothing as the political and military situation unfolds and Hastings is using the diplomatic niceties of these first letters to stall whilst the parties evaluate their military and foreign policy positions.

The fact that Hastings is able to sustain this speaks to his authority, rather than the fact that he does not have any – 'Et quant le pourroye faire, si n'ai ge pas commission ne

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Arthurson. 'Espionage and Intelligence from the Wars of the Roses to the Reformation.' *Nottingham Medieval Studies XXXV*, 1991. 134.

[76] Meek. 88.

[77] Meek. 88.

[78] Meek. 89. trans. Meek

auctorité de communiquer avecques aucun'.[79] ['But even if I could, I do not have the power or authority to treat with anyone.'][80] If true, Hastings has not been given any direct instructions from Edward – although he may have been specifically told not to negotiate.

Hastings was close to the king and his authority descended directly from Edward. It is unlikely that he was acting alone. Hastings had been appointed lieutenant of Calais on 18th July 1471 following the death of the Earl of Warwick at Barnet. Warwick had been popular, and his officers had a personal loyalty to him - they wore the Neville livery and the ragged staff badge. The Calais garrison was essential to the king, because it contained a cohort of professional soldiers and the captain was able to operate 'with a dangerous degree of independence from Westminster'.[81] Warwick had been considered almost a king on a par with Edward IV himself ('two kings of England, M. de Warwick and another whose name escapes me')[82] and undertook his own diplomatic missions, not always seeing eye to eye with Edward. When Warwick died, Edward wanted to appoint Anthony Woodville to the Calais position. However, much to Edward's annoyance, Woodville wanted to go on crusade.[83] Hastings was Edward's choice in his place; he was popular, trusted and had a reputation for military prowess. He had built up an impressive number of indentured retainers, who he had been able to call on when Edward IV landed at Ravenspur in 1471.[84] However, Edward made a change to the appointment. Hastings was

[79] Meek. 90. Letter 2, trans. Meek, 91.
[80] Meek. 91
[81] Grummitt. 263.
[82] Jean de Waurin. E. Hardy trans. *Anciennes Chroniques d'Engleterre*, vol 2. London: HMSO, 1891. 326.
[83] Christopher Wilkins. *The Last Knight Errant, Sir Edward Woodville and the Age of Chivalry.* London, I.B. Taurus, 2010. 47.
[84] Embree and Tavormina. 157-191.

initially made Lieutenant, not Captain, and, as Grummitt notes 'the title *locum tenenti* demonstrated clearly that his authority descended from the king.....By appointing men with household connections – and thus a personal oath of loyalty to the king sworn through Hastings as chamberlain – Edward made loyalty to the crown synonymous with loyalty to the lieutenant of Calais.'[85] Warwick had been considered as the 'Kingmaker' with Edward beholden to him. Hastings, on the other hand, was the household man who owed everything to Edward, and this made the position subservient rather than a threat.

The Admiral of France was becoming impatient and by the April 19th, he despatches an envoy, Olivier le Roux, to try to negotiate with Hastings directly. In his 'credence, le Roux conveys Louis XI's wishes - the marriage of Elizabeth of York to the Dauphin and the continuation of the Treaty of Picquigny. It is likely that le Roux received these instructions direct from Louis XI[86] and Hastings includes the credence, signed by le Roux, in the Letterbook. Unfortunately, it is incomplete, although Hastings has made his own notes of the conversation. He writes:

> Après ladite credence declairée et bailliée par escript par ledit maister Olivier, demande, par moy, Hastinges, declairer les terres et seigneuries qui ne son point tenues de la couronne de France et quelle assistance et aide le roy, son maister, vouldra faire, et au despens de qui ce sera.[87] [After the said credence was declared and presented in writing by the said master Olivier, he was asked, by me, Hastings, to declare the lands and lordships which are not held in the crown of

[85] Grummitt. 263-4.
[86] J. Calmette, et G. Perinelle, *Louis XI et L'Angleterre (1461-1483)*. Paris: Editions August Picard, 1930. 376-7. *Instructions de Louis XI à Olivier le Roux. Vers Septembre 1477 No. 72* Bibliothèque Nationale, f. fr. 10187, fol. 123-124.
[87] Meek. 94.

France, and what assistance and help the king, his master, would like to have, and at whose expense this would be.][88]

This suggests that Louis XI has asked for Edward's help in taking the Burgundian lands and is proposing a split of the spoils. This is not explicit in the letter or credence, so must have been a verbal request. Hastings notes that le Roux said the details[89] would be dealt with by the French ambassadors when they travelled to England. Louis thinks Edward's help can be bought, as it was at Picquigny, and is proposing a joint war against Burgundy. Remarkably, Hastings notes that 'Car je me suis excuse d'en advertir le roy par semble response que j'ay rescript à monseigneur l'admiral.'[90] [For I have excused myself from informing the king by a response similar to the one I have written to the admiral.']. He decides to withhold this information from the king. If this is genuine, and a personal note, it is the first time we see clear evidence of Hastings pursuing his own agenda. Does he withhold the information to prevent Edward being tempted by the spoils of war and siding with Louis, or is Hastings simply maintaining his position of 'no authority' and refusing to play the negotiating game with le Roux? Does he withhold the information because he thinks this is in Edward's best interests, or does Hastings want to prevent an English / French alliance?

Hastings reminds le Roux that the date of payment for Edward's pension has passed. This would be consistent with Edward's wish to maintain the Treaty of Picquigny, retain his pension, and go ahead with the marriage of the Dauphin to Elizabeth of York. Le Roux promises that this will be dealt with, within eight or ten days, i.e., he would like

[88] Meek. trans. 95.
[89] Meek. 94.
[90] Meek. 94.

confirmation that Edward is going to help him before paying the pension. The final note shows how pleased Hastings is with himself and how he has dealt with this messenger. He notes, rather smugly,

> ledit maister Olivier m'a délivré, par escript de sa main, sa credence à sa manière, qu'il s'en repentist, et l'eust bien voulu ravoir. Ce non obstant, je l'ay..[91] [the said master Olivier has delivered his credence to me, by the writing of his own hand, in his own style, which he <now> regrets, and would gladly have it back again. This notwithstanding, I have it.]

Why does Hastings make this note in the Calais Letterbook, clearly intent on its preservation? Firstly, to record a verbal exchange in which a concrete request from Louis to Edward is made. Secondly, to make it clear that Hastings is continuing to refuse to negotiate with Louis but pushing for the pension to be paid and the Treaty upheld. Thirdly, he gloats that he has outwitted le Roux and retained the credence, making it a document that could be used against him (or Louis) as proof that a deal has been offered. Le Roux's credence is the only French document included in the Letterbook, making it very much a one way conversation. This seems to be a deliberate choice, including only Hastings' own letters and perspective on the situation. It is designed to show his actions in a favourable light, carrying out the wishes of his king whilst maintaining a diplomatic stand-off with the French. Does it also cover up subversive activity? This is possible, by Hastings' own admission that he is excusing himself from giving the news of the French offer to Edward.

[91] Meek. 97.

Delaying tactics continue in the sixth letter, in which Hastings urges the sending of ambassadors to Edward, thus avoiding any negotiation himself. He also responds to an alleged attack by four Burgundian archers. It is possible that Edward, and/or Hastings, were covertly supplying archers to Margaret, and we know that some professional soldiers from England did fight in the Burgundian army.[92] Hastings continues to play the diplomatic game, maintaining that he knows nothing about the incident 'de laquelle prinse je n'ay eu nulle congnoissance'[93]. In the same letter, Hastings enquires about a servant of his who is under arrest in Paris. He urges the admiral to act for him to gain his release, offering reciprocal aid should the situation arise.

By mid-May, Hastings writes directly to Louis XI. Firstly, he counteracts the rumour that Edward IV is unwell, which may be diplomatic code for 'not in control'. This harks back to the 1463 letter, when Hastings tells Lannoy that Edward is healthy and out hunting. Specifically, Hastings writes 'Et vous plaise savoir qui vostre cousin le roy, mon souverain seigneur, n'a eu nulle enfermecté de maladie, comme le porteur de ceste m'a infourmé avez esté adverti par aucuns Escoçois, mais Dieu merci, a esté et est en trèsbonne sancté et prosperité et fait aussi grant chière que jamais'.[94] [And may it please you to know that your cousin the king, my sovereign lord, has no infirmity of illness, as the bearer of these has informed me you have been told by some Scots, but, God be thanked, he has been and is in very good health and prosperity and makes as merry as ever.][95]

[92] Meek. 'Sir Thomas Everingham'. 238-248.
[93] Meek. *Calais.* 98. Letter 6.
[94] Meek. 100.
[95] Meek. 101.

As if to reinforce the contradiction of this rumour, Hastings deploys the same tactic as in 1463, saying that Edward was holding the feast of the Order of the Garter as usual; 'Et ce jourduy tient la feste de son Ordre de la Jarretière au lieu acoustumé en son chastel de Wyndesore'.[96] In 1463, Edward was hunting. In 1477, he is making merry. In both cases, this masks a diplomatic crisis, and shows that Hastings understands the power of making it seem that Edward is both confident and unconcerned. As in 1463, this information for Louis is superfluous, but Hastings escalates the ruse to invoke the chivalric Order of the Garter. Initiated by Edward III, the Order was revived and rejuvenated by Edward IV. He made a great show of being a chivalric king both in looks, deeds, and military prowess, in contrast to Henry VI and even trying to surpass Henry's father. Henry V's reputation stemmed from his victory at Agincourt in sharp contrast to Edward's capitulation at Picquigny. Hastings, in Calais, was not an eyewitness to the Order of the Garter celebrations. He reports that a feast did take place on 10th May, but Michael K. Jones quotes Dalton's Garter Book as saying 'the garter feast was originally to be held at Windsor on 23rd April 1477. It instead took place where the king was in residence, at 'St. John's', over 22-24 April, presumably because Edward could not travel. A separate feast was then held at Windsor on 10 May, but the king was unable to attend, and sent a proxy.[97] Here is another example of Hastings covering for the king, if Dalton is accurate.

Hastings maintains an air of lightness by thanking Louis for intervening in some problem that he has had with his harnesses, bringing the tone of the letter back to domestic

[96] Meek. 100.
[97] Jones. 290.

detail. He must have been on good personal terms with Louis to do this, and it is worth remembering that, according to Commynes, Louis 'respected him more than all the other servants of the king of England.'[98] Hastings issues a veiled rebuke about a piracy incident by the French against a ship of Dover but leaves the tone even and merely asks what Louis would like to do about it. He is balancing diplomacy with a balanced response. This informality deflects from the real question – are Edward and Louis planning to go to war, together or against each other?

By 18th May,[99] the tone has changed, reflecting a personal crisis for Hastings. He writes with a sense of hurt, emotion, and supplication directly to Louis XI,[100] 'je suis bien esbahy que en ... devers moy'.[101] [I am very shocked that ... towards me.] He sends Lord Rochechouart to deliver the letter and also to relay to Louis his thoughts regarding 'a few matters touching the maintaining of the amity between you and the king (Edward)'.[102] Something else, unintelligible from the remains of the letters, has happened, causing Hastings to plead to Louis 'begging you not to be displeased with me about this.'[103] Hastings is using emotive language 'shocked' and 'begging' and the tension in the letter is clear. In other documentation, Jones reports that on 3rd May Louis XI had opened an investigation into 'reports that Lord Hastings had offered help to the garrison of Boulogne and attempted to bring English troops into the town.'[104] The loss of Boulogne would put Calais in peril from the French troops. The witness testimonies quoted by Jones report

[98] Commynes. 360
[99] Meek. 103.
[100] The letter is damaged and incomplete.
[101] Meek. 102.
[102] Meek. 102.
[103] Meek. 103.
[104] Jones. 279.

that one Reginald Clifton had been sent from Calais to make the offer[105], but the townspeople played down Hastings' involvement - 'Jehan Marchant, mayor of the town, heard on oath in the said enquiry, says and deposes on the oath which he has taken to God and to the king that he does not know that the lord Hastings made any offers of aid to the town of Boulogne, either orally or in writing, of which he had any knowledge'.[106] Reginald Clifton had made the offer, but not linked it to Hastings, which would have conveyed official English policy and broken the Treaty of Picquigny. Louis accuses Hastings, but he is unable to give concrete proof. The mayor is equally careful – confirmation of Hastings' involvement would have caused a major diplomatic incident.

At this point, Hastings travels back to England, perhaps for consultation with Edward. John Paston, writing on 23rd June 1477 reports:

> Tydyngs butt that yisterdaye my Lady Marqueys off Dorset, whych is my Lady Hastyngs dowtr, hadyd chylde a sone. Item, my Lord Chamberlayn is commyn hydder ffro Caleys, and redyn with the Kynge to Wyndeshor, and the Kyng will be here ageyn on Mondaye.'[107]

By including this alongside the news about Cecily Bonville's son it shows that Paston considered the situation to be completely normal, the news of Hastings' return being part of a general news update with no apparent alarm.

By 30th June, Hastings is back in Calais with no evidence of a disagreement with Edward. He writes to Louis on 23rd July 1477 as the piracy situation has escalated. A merchant ship

[105] Jones. 291.
[106] Jones. 288.
[107] Gairdner. Vol 5. 290.

belonging to the staplers of Calais was attacked and sunk by a ship of war from Boulogne inside English territorial waters, 'the currents and sea-limits of the king',[108] with the merchandise being pillaged. During storms and strong winds, the Boulogne ship of war took refuge in the harbour at Calais. The crew and the goods on board were seized by the town merchants seeking reparation for their former losses. Hastings informs Louis of this incident in order to preserve good relations despite 'certaines estranges paroles que aucuns desdits compaignons de guerre ont eu publiquement'.[109] [Certain strange words that some of the said soldiers have spoken publicly.][110] Clearly, tempers on the ground were heated and hostile words exchanged, but Hastings phrases the 'certain strange words' to imply that, in diplomatic code, the pillaging was sanctioned by Louis. Hastings, playing an even hand, says he is waiting to hear how Louis wishes to deal with the ship and the soldiers held in Calais, and thus trying to flush out if Louis wants them pardoned or held as pirates which would expose his intent.

By the end of August, Hastings has clearly tried the patience of Louis to the limit. Hastings writes to him (Letter 12):

> Et vous plaise savoir, Sire, que j'ay entendu tant par les complaints que vos ambassadeurs on faicte de moy au roy, mon souverain seigneur, comme par voz derreniers lettres qu'il vous a pleu me rescripre d'Arras, et aussi par le rapport d'ung myen poursuivant estant Vendredi derrenier devers vous à Thérouenne, les desplaisirs que prenez envers moy en plusieurs manières don't je suis très

[108] Meek. 106.
[109] Meek. 106.
[110] Meek. 107.

> desplaisant.[111] [And may it please you to know, that I have understood, both by the complaints that your ambassadors have made about me to the king, my sovereign lord, as well as by your last letter, that it has pleased you to write to me from Arras, and also by the report of a pursuivant of mine who was with you last Friday at Thérouanne, the displeasure that you have taken towards me in several matters, about which I am most unhappy.][112]

Meek translates the final 'je suis très desplaisant' as 'unhappy'. This would portray Hastings as 'distressed' or 'upset' and supplicant to Louis, whereas if it is translated as 'displeased', mirroring the same word used to reflects Louis' attitude to Hastings, it might be interpreted as a counterchallenge. Hastings is deploying balanced diplomacy, a 'tit-for-tat' ping pong of complaints and protestations. Every time Louis makes an accusation, Hastings makes one back, maintaining the delicate position but also the veiled threats. Hastings demonstrates that he knows what has been said to the king, admits that the poursuivant has reported back to him and then plays back the words in Louis' own letter. He is, in code, saying to Louis that he understands the game being played. He writes no more in his defence in the letter but asks Louis to hear the case put to him by his envoy, William Laverock. In Laverock's credence, we find out that Louis is displeased with Hastings because 'continuellement il envoyé ses gens avecques voz rebelles et desobeissans subgetz'.[113] [he is continually sending his people to your rebels and disobedient subjects. (ie the Burgundians)].[114] The Laverock script continues 'Sire, as to

[111] Meek. 108.
[112] Meek. 109.
[113] Meek. 110.
[114] Meek. 111.

your writing to him that he has offered to place 500 or 600 men within Boulogne to aid it against you, Sire, saving your grace, you have been misinformed about this, for my lord never did such a thing, notwithstanding that he was requested to send people there by a letter of my lady of Burgundy, which he refused entirely to do.'[115] This refers back to the Boulogne inquiry, which was unable to substantiate Hastings' involvement. It also acknowledges that Margaret of Burgundy has written directly to Hastings asking for troops. It was known that she had written to Edward IV, her brother, for aid as early as February, but we do not have a copy of her letter to Hastings himself.

In the credence, Hastings is able to use more indignant and emotive language to get his message across. When accused over the imprisonment of Lord Rouchechouart, who he describes as 'le plus simple homme du monde',[116] [the most innocent man in the world], Hastings is quite forthright, as his integrity has been challenged. He pleads through Laverock 'c'est une chose qui gresve trop monseigneur que vous devez avoir telle imaginacion sur lui. Car il ne vouldroit avoir fait à ung Sarrazin.'[117] [it greatly grieves my lord, that you should have such a mistaken idea (or 'fancy') about him, for he would not have wished to have done that to a Saracen.][118] Bearing in mind that this is a time of crusades, it conjures the chivalric code and 'good versus evil'. It is an extreme reference, but not unique, harking back to 1450 and Jack Cade's Manifesto.[119] Hastings maintains he

[115] Meek. 111.
[116] Meek. 112.
[117] Meek. 112.
[118] Meek. 113.
[119] 'Item. Wherefore we exhort all the king's true liege men to help us, to support us, for whatsoever he be that will not... he is falser than a Jew or Saracen.' James Gairdner, ed. *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, with Historical Memoranda by John Stowe*. Camden Society, New Series, Vol. 28 London, Royal Historical Society, 1880. 94-98.

has not aided the rebels but 's'est conduit indifferentement comme il doit faire'.[120] [he has conducted himself indifferently (impartially) as he ought to do.][121] Further, he requests to know who has misinformed Louis, so that he can respond to them 'plus amplement qu'il n'ose faire a vostre grace,'[122] [more fully than he would dare to do to your grace].[123] One suspects that his response might not consist of words alone, for Hastings is trying to find out who is briefing against him and spying for Louis.

The Laverock credence goes on to confirm that Edward has sent more soldiers to Hastings, which Louis might interpret as a hostile act, but that 'this was for the surety and safeguard of the town and marches of Calais'.[124] To reinforce Hastings' credentials, the credence claims that 'my said lord chamberlain has been nurtured by the father of the king, your said cousin, and has been continually in the service of the king'.[125] He stresses his length of service and loyalty - this might be a reminder to Edward as well as Louis. Richard, Duke of York, Edward's father, was known for his military service against France in the reign of Henry VI, so by referencing him Hastings could be positioning himself as a long serving, trusted servant, but also implying he was actually against the French, as the Duke of York had been.

Whilst there is no further detail in Hastings' own letters about the cause of Louis' displeasure there is a document from September 1477 in which Louis XI gives specific

[120] Meek. 112.
[121] Meek. 113.
[122] Meek. 114.
[123] Meek. 115.
[124] Meek. 115.
[125] Meek. 117.

instructions to Olivier le Roux.[126] After dealing with the usual pleasantries, Louis refers to 'le moyen (agreement) de madame de Bourgogne et de monsr. le chamberlain'.[127] Louis is then able to treat this as a suggestion of diplomatic treachery and use it as an excuse for delaying his ambassadors. Firstly, this demonstrates that Louis does regard Hastings as acting with the full authority of Edward. Secondly, it confirms that he has intelligence about an agreement between Margaret and Hastings for the provision of soldiers. Louis then refers to a plan to marry the Duke of Clarence to Mary of Burgundy, the heir to the Burgundian dukedom, saying that Margaret is secretly plotting with people in England and that this cannot be to Edward's advantage. Given the rebellious history of the Duke of Clarence, and the mischief-making of Louis' messages, it is perhaps not surprising there is speedy action by Edward leading to the eventual arrest of the Duke of Clarence in 1478. The plot to marry Clarence to Mary of Burgundy seems to have been widely known, and is recorded by the Crowland Chronicler:

> After Charles' death it was common knowledge that his widow, the duchess, Lady Margaret, who was more fond of her brother Clarence than of anyone else in the family, devoted all her effort and all her attention to uniting in marriage Mary, the only daughter and heiress of the deceased Duke Charles, and the Duke of Clarence, whose wife had recently died. Such an exalted destiny for an ungrateful brother was not to the liking of the king. He therefore threw all the obstacles he could in the way of any such marriage taking place....[128]

[126] Calmette & Perinelle. 376-7.
[127] Calmette & Perinelle. 377.
[128] Crowland. 143.

Hastings returns to England from Calais in September 1477. Whether he is recalled because Edward is displeased, or goes of his own accord, the situation in unclear. In the final letter, Hastings writes to Louis that 'I have decided to be in England with my said master, the king, very soon'.[129] Even if recalled by Edward, he is spinning it as his own choice, couched in a letter which is a polite leave-taking, full of the diplomatic niceties and pleasantries but mentioning nothing of the previous accusations.

These letters give some insight into a murky period in Anglo-French diplomacy. Almost nothing can be taken at face value and Hastings' letters try to maintain a position of impartiality whilst masking espionage and activity behind the scenes. Louis' complaints to Edward may have caused displeasure, especially if he thinks Hastings has been working with Margaret of Burgundy or been involved in the Clarence plot. It might be that Edward viewed Hastings' actions as a genuine misunderstanding, or simply part of Edward's diplomatic game to make a show of responding to Louis' accusations. On the whole, Hastings has maintained the diplomatic balance and held his own in correspondence with the French king.

The Calais Letterbook has many similarities to the diplomatic correspondence to Lannoy in 1463. It reiterates themes, for example, in 1463 Hastings complains that his letters are opened by his enemies. In Calais letter 13, when writing to the Admiral of France, he says 'regarding the letter that the Breton was carrying, about which the king believes I knew nothing, I assure you, my lord admiral, that I had it in my hands and could well have kept

[129] Meek. 123.

it, which I did not wish to do.'[130] He does not say that he did not read the letter before passing it on, but is signalling that he had the opportunity to do so. This is typical of Hastings' character as portrayed in these letters – on one hand all chivalry, politeness, and co-operation, and on the other the hint of secret intrigues, support for Burgundy and delaying tactics. He knows that someone in the French court circle is briefing against him, but he does not know who, leading to an increasing sense of stress as the crisis evolves.

Hastings maintains that he has no authority, although the French king clearly considers that he has. In 1477, by his reference to his loyalty since the time of Edward's father, he seems to contradict this himself. He reports on Edward's health and life of leisure, both in 1463 and 1477, building a public image of a king who is both confident and unconcerned in the face of a diplomatic crisis. He buys time for Edward to nuance his foreign policy, but it is not clear if they were always in step – did Hastings go further than Edward would have wished in supporting Burgundy or was his failure to keep the support a secret the real blunder – despite trying to convince Louis XI that it was all a misunderstanding?

Hastings is adept at diplomatic correspondence and observes all the niceties of greeting and leave-taking. In the credences given to the messengers Hastings uses more emotional language, the mention of Saracens, the reference to Richard Duke of York and the promises that Hastings will perform any service for Louis XI or the Admiral, they just need to name it. In the same breath, he says he cannot do anything for them because he does not have the authority, and he must stay in Calais because of his pressing duties. Hastings

[130] Meek. 119.

is the lynchpin of Edward's foreign policy at this time, literally 'holding the fort' in Calais whilst the military and diplomatic situation evolves. Grummitt considers that 'Hastings' handling of the crisis of 1477-78 appears to have strengthened his hold over the Calais Pale. In February 1479 Hastings entered into a new indenture with the king as Captain of Calais. It confirmed 'alle and euerything to thoffice of capitaigne ... apperteignyng or ought to apperteigne' for a further ten years'.[131] By this time he had been by Edward's side for almost twenty years, and their bond was as strong as ever.

Considering the time elapsed between the two sets of letters, they are remarkably similar. This consistency points to Hastings' statesmanship and skill in playing the diplomatic game, coupled with his loyalty in protecting Edward at all costs. He uses diplomatic protocols but also indignant and emotive language when it suits his purpose. In compiling the Letterbook we realise that he is aware of the importance of his own role and how it will reflect upon his reputation. From a retainer of Richard, duke of York, in the late 1450s, Hastings is now regarded by the French King as the most important contact in the diplomatic game. This reflects not only his reputation as a military hero and capable courtier, but also his skill in strategy – it could not have been easy to balance the tripartite intrigues between France, Burgundy and England whilst pretending to do nothing!

[131] Grummit. 268.

4: Hastings in his Own Words (2) – Legal Documents

In contrast to the letters, four legal documents give a glimpse of Hastings operating away from international diplomacy and politics, revealing how he conducted his private affairs. They show the opportunism of a marriage contract, his approach to public service and how he fashioned his reputational legacy in his will. An indenture from 1469[132] illustrates Hastings' role as Master of the Mint, strategically important for the Yorkist's economic strategy, performed with the diligence and attention to detail which was the foundation of his successful twenty year career serving the court. It also shows his working relationship with Edward IV as together they counter the country's dire financial straits.

A paragraph from a contract[133] between Hastings and Elizabeth Woodville, shows how he looks to profit from the marriage of his yet unborn daughter and take advantage of Elizabeth's misfortune after the death of her first husband. Unintentionally, it sows the seeds of a power struggle which lasts beyond the death of Edward IV. Ten years his senior, Hastings did not expect Edward to die before him, and so his own will,[134] the third text, is a plea to his sovereign to look after his children, reaffirm his allegiance and consolidate his reputation. The will of Katheryn Hastings,[135] his wife, gives an insight into their domestic life, with her focus on maintaining the household and her continued fidelity.

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[132] Taylor Combe, 'Copy of an Indenture Made in 1469: Between King Edward IV and William Lord Hastings, Master of the Mint, Respecting the Regulation of the Coinage in the Tower of London'. *Archaeologica,* 15 (1806): 164–78. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261340900018336.

[133] George Smith, *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*. London, Ellis. 1935. 31.

[134] Sir Nicholas Harris Nichols, *Testamenta Vetusta: Being Illustrations from Wills, of Manners, Customs, &c. as Well as of the Descents and Possessions of Many Distinguished Families. From the Reign of Henry the Second to the Accession of Queen Elizabeth*. London, Nichols & son, 1826. 368-375.

[135] David Baldwin, *The Kingmaker's Sisters - Six Powerful Women in the Wars of the Roses*. Stroud: The History Press, 2009. 150.

1) Hastings as Master of the Mint and the Indenture of 1469

The economic background to the Wars of the Roses was one of the main drivers behind Richard, Duke of York's push for the throne. In the mid fifteenth century, the royal finances were in a mess. Europe was suffering the Great Bullion Famine, caused by a shortage of gold and silver and prices were continually rising, reducing the profit margin on minted coins which went into the crown coffers. England was in a particularly poor position because 'the valuation of English gold and silver was out of step with the principal trading partner, the Low Countries. As a result of the Lancastrian under-valuation of gold, English nobles (gold coins) left England in vast quantities, accumulating in Bruges, among other places, where they were more highly prized.'[136]

The economic situation impacted the general public. John Paston noted 'the contry is bareyn of money',[137] and that it was difficult to gets debts repaid because much of the money was on the continent and not easily repatriated:

> Item, I remember that thys mony þat she sholde have is nott redy, but in the hands of marchauntys off the Estaple (Calais), whyche at a prove ye shall fynde par case so slake payerys þat ye myght be deseyved ther-by. I knowe diverse have lost mony er they cowed gete ther dywtes owte off th'Estaple.[138]

Sir John Fortescue,[139] reported that interest rates were between 25% and 33% and the 'inability of the Henry VI's government to pay its way had resulted in a large and

[136] N. J. Mayhew, 'The Monetary Background to the Yorkist Recoinage of 1464-1471'. *British Numismatic Journal.* Vol 44. London, 1974. 62-73.
[137] Mayhew. 72.
[138] Mayhew. 72.
[139] Sir John Fortescue, and Shelley Lockwood ed. *On the Laws and Governance of England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 118.

mounting debt – from £168,000 in 1433 to £372,000 in 1449'.[140] Edward IV inherited a critical situation and he and Hastings had to take drastic action.

Richard, Duke of York, as Protector, had reduced the size of the king's household to 424 officials and servants for the king, 120 for the queen, and 38 for the prince.[141] As soon as the king was restored these economies were abandoned. Parliament addressed the topic again after the Battle of St. Albans in 1455 – Archbishop Bourchier stating that the parliaments' prime purpose was to 'establish an ordinate and a substantiall rule for the Kynges honourable Houshold'.[142] This was achieved post- exile, when Hastings requested a copy of the Burgundian ordinance[143] from Olivier de la Marche[144], leading to Edward IV's Black Book[145] in 1478, which detailed almost every aspect of household expenditure end entitlement. However, cost control contrasted with what was expected of a king. Sir John Fortescue writes:

> Item it shall need the kyng haue such tresour, as he mey make new bildynges whan he woll, ffor his pleasure and magnificence; and he mey bie hym riche clothes, riche furres….rich stones… and other juels and ornamentes conuenyent to his estate roiall..... Ffor yff a king did not so, nor myght do, he lyved then not like

[140] A. R. Myers, ed. *The Household of Edward IV. The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478.* Manchester: The University of Manchester Press, 1958.
[141] Myers. 9.
[142] Myers. 10.
[143] Werner Paravicini, 'The Courts and the Dukes of Burgundy: A Model for Europe?' *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court and the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450-1650.*, 69–102. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
[144] A courtier serving Charles of Burgundy
[145] Myers. *The Black Book*.

his estate, but rather in miseire, and in more subgeccion than doth a priuate person.[146]

A king needed to act like a king, and Henry VI did not. Edward IV not only looked like a king, tall and handsome, but also acted like one with feasts, hunting, and jousts. It was an essential part of his public image, giving the general populace confidence in his rule and building his reputation with foreign rulers and their diplomats.[147] Edward wanted to maintain an outward show of kingship, but at the same time balance the books and reduce borrowing. By the end of his reign, Myers notes 'the throne was occupied by a man who not only knew the importance of charming beholders and impressed both home and foreign observers by the magnificence of his court, but was the first king since Henry II to die, not in debt, but worth a fortune'.[148]

Edward IV, aided by Hastings, reversed a dire economy and took the country from recession to growth. Their strategy was the 'recoinage', essentially a devaluation, masked by the introduction of new coins.[149] A huge logistical undertaking, Edward needed a reliable Master of the Mint to ensure that it was successfully executed and publicly acknowledged as carried out with integrity. For this, he turned to Hastings.

Traditionally, the London Mint had been run by goldsmiths not politicians:

[146] Fortescue. 125.
[147] Gabriel Tetzel recounted 'the king distributed largesse in a very conspicuous manner to the trumpeter, pipers and other players, the forty-two singing men and the twenty-four heralds and pursuivants'. Myers. 47-48.
[148] Myers. 11.
[149] A modern comparison would be decimalisation in 1971.

> as goldsmiths they would have the technical expertise needed in the mint, and they might be expected to command the confidence of other London goldsmiths who were customers of the mint in the Tower.[150]

The first 'non-technical' appointee was Robert Manfeld, a favourite of Henry VI, and a lucrative 'grace and favour' appointment. Hastings, however, took charge with a 'hands on' approach. The speed with which Hastings and Edward embarked upon the recoinage shows they understood York's financial strategy. Publicly, Edward lived a flamboyant life of hunting and feasting, the chivalric image of kingship. However, he understood the importance of trade and of the crown paying its way rather than squandering taxes. These conversations must have taken place prior to the battles of 1460 – not just planning military victory but debating policies to manage the economy.

The recoinage began in 1464, and by 1469 the procedures were fine-turned. The Indenture deals in depth with how the precious metals were to be valued, and how the processes of the Mint were to be managed. In the historical context, this fine-tuning is important, because it would have allowed the recoinage to continue (with deputies) despite the tumultuous situation which was developing between Edward IV and the Earl of Warwick.[151] It details Hastings' duties as Master of the Mint.[152] Firstly, the Mint needed enough metal to recast so the 'maist' of the mint must pay a fair price for bullion brought to the Tower. There is even a dispute procedure if

[150] Martin Allen. *Mints and Money in Medieval England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 90.
[151] 1469 saw the Rebellion of Robin of Redesdale and Clarence's unauthorised marriage to Warwick's daughter, Isabelle, on 11th July and Edward's capture by Warwick at Olney. See Scofield Vol 1 p497.
[152] Combe. 165.

> the marchaunt which bringeth his gold and sylver may not accorde bytwene thaym the very value that than the kyngs assaiours to that deputed in the p'sence of the seid wardeyn and his maist.[153]

By dealing fairly with the merchants, Hastings was able to achieve the recoinage with almost total success. He was the trusted figurehead, demonstrating a detailed knowledge of the processes and setting the standards of integrity – reflected in his own reputation.

Secondly, the Mint had to have the workforce and skills to ensure success. The Indenture enabled the requisitioning of workers from the city during periods of intense activity.[154] This allowed Hastings to assemble his workforce with strong powers, for if there was non-performance on the part of the workers they risk 'payn of lesyng of their franchesies and their bodyes to prison'.[155] Operating as a bullion exchange, Hastings tackled the problem of coins leaking abroad and that 'no man brynge into Englond no man fals ne conntrefet coyne of gold or sylver upon payne aforeseid.'[156] He clamped down on counterfeit coins, limited foreign exchange and helped to strengthen the English currency abroad.

The minutiae of operating processes reflects Hastings' grasp of detail and planning. For example, 'p'sones so bringing gold or sylver to the Toure have free entrée and issue by the gate… ynward and outward at all tyme without any arresting disturbaunce'.[157] This is crowd control, encouraging people to bring in their old coins, secure but welcoming. When the new coins were minted, they were to be:

[153] Combe. 173.
[154] Combe. 172.
[155] Combe. 175.
[156] Combe. 175.
[157] Combe. 174.

> putte in a box to make the assaies at Westm'…. they shall be ensiled with the seel of theforesaid wardeyn, and with the seel of the maist' and controller; and the seid box shalbe shitte with iii keys, wherof the o'n key shal abyde toward the wardeyn, and the second toward the maist' aboveseid and the iiide toward the controller.[158]

With three separate keys and three separate key holders, it shows how involved Hastings was in the day to day operation.

New coins were introduced, the Angel and Half-Angel, the Royal and a Half-Royal, a political move as all the new coins displayed the head of the new king. Old coins disappeared so people were no longer reminded of Henry VI. The names imply the direct line between god and the king, showing the use of language as propaganda, a public relations exercise that enhanced Yorkist prestige. Gregory records the reaction in the first few days:

> mony men grogyd passynge sore for they covthe not rekyn that gold not so quyckely as they dyd the olde golde. And men myght goo thorougheowte a street or thoroughe a hole parysche of that he myght chonge hit. And sum men sayd that the newe golde was not soo good as the olde golde was, for it was alayyd.[159]

Although difficult to 'rekyn' in the new currency, the speed of the recoinage meant that it was soon accepted. Gregory grumbles about the everyday tasks of changing money, but he does not grumble about the king or Hastings, so their swift actions did not damage their popularity.

[158] Banks. 170.
[159] Embrell and Tavormina. 82.

The economic imperative faced by the country was strategised before Edward came to the throne so that he could move swiftly and decisively. They understood of the power of language in the names of the new coins and the power of propaganda in removing images of the previous king. The Yorkist regime, through Hastings, delivered efficiently and effectively and was seen to do so. What does this tell us about Hastings' character? He takes his responsibilities seriously, is diligent and across the detail. He built a professional executive team around him which meant the recoinage continued even if hie was required elsewhere. In a parallel role today, the delivery authority would have a CEO[160] who is usually the strategist, figurehead, and charismatic leader. They are supported by a COO,[161] who designs the project plan, dots the 'i's and crosses the 't's. This encapsulates the working relationship between Edward and Hastings and explains their successful partnership over twenty years. They have complimentary skills, like two pieces of a jigsaw, and create a formidable team.

2. <u>The Marriage Contract between William, Lord Hastings and Elizabeth Woodville.</u>

Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville is pivotal to his reign but problematic. It took place in secret and Elizabeth was a widow, not of royal birth.[162] By marrying an Englishwoman, Edward precluded a diplomatic alliance which might have strengthened his position abroad. Shakespeare gives this as the reason for the alienation of Warwick in *3 Henry VI.*[163] Hastings and Elizabeth were neighbours in Leicestershire – their houses at

[160] Chief Executive Officer
[161] Chief Operating Officer
[162] However, her mother was Jacquetta, dowager Duchess of Bedford, and daughter of the Count of St. Pol.
[163] *3 Henry VI:III: 31-33.*

Groby and Kirby Muxloe are only four miles apart. There is proof of this 'neighbourly' relationship in the contract between Elizabeth and Hastings dated 13th April 1464 in which Hastings promises to support Elizabeth in her petition to the king and contracts marriage between their children. It is not a contract between equals. Elizabeth Woodville was the widow of Sir John Grey, killed fighting for the Lancastrians. She had two young sons, Thomas and Richard. On the other hand, Hastings had just been knighted, ennobled, and appointed Lord Chamberlain. He was newly married to Katherine Neville, sister of the Earl of Warwick. She had one small daughter, Cecily, the Bonville heiress, who became Hastings' stepdaughter. Unfortunately, the full contract is lost, and the only remnant is a paragraph published by George Smith in 1935.[164] The contract is:

> .. made between Elizabeth Grey, widow of Sir John Grey, knight, son and heir of Edward Grey, late Lord Ferrers, and William, Lord Hastings for the marriage of Thomas Grey, her son or in case of his death of Richard his brother, with the eldest daughter to be born within the next five or six years to Lord Hastings; or failing such a daughter with one of the daughters to be born within the same period to Ralph Hastings, his brother, or, failing such a daughter with one of the daughters of Dame Anne Ferrers his sister. If any manors or possessions once belonging to Sir William Asteley, knight, called "Asterley lands" or any of the inheritance of dame Elizabeth "called Lady Ferrers of Groby" (save all manors, lands and tenements in Nobottle (Newbotell) and Brington, c. North hants. and *Woodham Ferrers, co. Essex*) were at any time recovered in the title and right of Thomas or Richard from the possession of any other person having an interest in them, half of the profits

[164] Smith. 31. Smith claims to have had the contract in his possession in 1935, but today its whereabouts are unknown.

> and rent therof while Thomas, or if he died, Richard, was under the age of twelve years was to belong to Lord Hastings and half to dame Elizabeth. Lord Hastings to pay her the sum of 500 marks for the marriage, but if both Thomas and Richard died before such marriage, or if there was no female issue as above she to pay him the sum of 250 marks.

Although the contract does not name Edward, we learn from it that Hastings (and Elizabeth) considered marriage to be a transaction, and we see Hastings taking advantage of Elizabeth's situation to broker a deal which should have been profitable for him. He is negotiating a business deal and clearly does not anticipate the eventual union. The contract is dated 13th April 1464, only a few days before the traditional date of 1st May for the wedding, so this is very quick work by Edward if the dates are correct. It also suggests that Hastings was not privy to all Edward's private business, and if he did anticipate Edward's intentions towards Elizabeth, he certainly did not expect the outcome to be marriage. Edward is acting alone, asserting his independence.

Hastings contracted to assist Elizabeth, so it is entirely plausible that he introduced Elizabeth to Edward so that she could plead her case herself. This is consistent with Shakespeare's portrayal of the introduction, in contrast to the romanticised portrayal by Mancini, where Edward is said to have held a dagger to her throat 'but she remained unperturbed and determined to die rather than live unchastely with him'.[165] The Arden Shakespeare is based on the Quarto editions[166], in which Edward introduces Elizabeth to

[165] Mancini, 43.
[166] First published 1595.

Gloucester and Clarence, holding court in the Palace in London. In the First Folio of 1623,[167] the scene includes Hastings and in some productions,[168] Hastings leads Elizabeth into the hall to meet the king, consistent with the contract. The source for Shakespeare is Hall, who gives two separate accounts of the marriage. This gives Shakespeare a choice of treatment, with Hall's earlier alternative account placing the initial meeting at Grafton: 'Where the duches of Bedford so-yorned, ...on who then was attending a doughter of hers, called dame Elizabeth Greye, widow of syr Ihon Grey knight, slayn at the last battell of saincte Albons, by the power of kyng Edward.'[169] Shakespeare may have considered this a distraction which did not add anything to the dramatic narrative of the history plays. However, it persists in popular culture and is perpetuated in modern fiction – e.g. Philippa Gregory's *The White Queen.*[170] Hall laments the marriage and says it leads to a great deal of trouble:

> Yet who so will marke the sequele of this story, shall manifestly perceyue, what murther, what miserie, & what troble ensued by reason of this mariage; for it cannot be denied but for this mariage king Edward was expulsed the Realm, & durst not abide. And for this mariage was therle of Warwycke & his brother miserable slain.[171]

Robert Fabyan reports that Edward's motivation was love:

> In most secrete maner upon the fyrste day of May kynge Edward spoused Elizabeth late the wyfe of syr Johan Graye knyghte … which spousayles were solempnised erely in the morning at a towne named Grafton nere unto Stonynge-

[167] *3 Henry VI*. 71 footnote.
[168] e.g. RSC Summer 2022 'The Wars of the Roses'
[169] Hall. 26.
[170] Philippa Gregory, *The White Queen'*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
[171] Hall. 264.

> stratforde. At whyche maryage was no persones present, but the spouse, the spouses, the Duches of Bedford her mother, the preste two gentylwomen, & a young man to helpe the preste synge.[172]

Edward marries Elizabeth for love. The 'romance' is a presentation of courtly love as Edward wanted his court to be compared to that of King Arthur and Camelot. Whilst it might be a popular image, Gregory bemoans the outcome, and that Edward already had a reputation as a womaniser:

> Nowe take hede what loue may doo, for loue wylle not nor may not caste no favte nor perelle in noothyng. That same yere, the Fyrste day of May before sayde or wrete, oure souerayne lorde the Kynge Edward the IIII, was weddyd to the Lord Ryvers doughter .....But men mervelyd that oure souerayne lorde was so longe whytheowte any wyffe, and were euyr ferde that he had be not chaste of hys leuynge.[173]

Another objection to Elizabeth is that she is a widow, not a 'virgin queen'. Hastings himself had just married a widow,[174] but he is not present at the wedding. Once it is made public, it shifts the balance of power between Elizabeth and Hastings. She is now in the ascendancy and the tables turned when Thomas,[175] her son, married Hastings' stepdaughter, Cecily Bonville, one of the richest landowners in England. Hastings had one

[172] Smith. 33.
[173] Embree and Tavormina. 81.
[174] Katherine Neville, sister of the Earl of Warwick and widow of Sir William Harrington.
[175] Thomas became Marquis of Dorset.

daughter, Anne, who, if the contract had been fulfilled as written, should have married Thomas, but instead she went on to marry Sir John Donne.[176]

Fabyan says Edward married without the advice of his councillors .[177] Hall, however, says he did consult with the advisors he knew dare not speak against him, and this probably means Hastings.[178] Warwick favoured a foreign bride for diplomatic purposes – an alliance with France. He considered himself Edward's chief advisor, effectively ruling England through him. Commynes claims Warwick 'could almost be called the king's father as a result of the services and education he had given him.' [179] At the same time, Edward was growing into his role as king and asserting his own authority. Already in correspondence with Lord Lannoy,[180] it is possible that a strategic alliance with Burgundy was favoured by Edward, with Hasting's influence working in the background as the situation unfolds. The marriage enabled Edward to avoid a tie up with France and make a move away from Warwick's influence, leading ultimately to a strategic alliance with Burgundy, cemented by his sister Margaret's marriage to Charles of Burgundy in 1468.

Warkworth's Chronicle [181] reports that when Warwick returned from France there rose 'great dissention' between him and Edward, so much that 'they never loved each other after'.[182] Edward moved away from Warwick's influence and the marriage marks his emergence as an independent, strong, monarch.

[176] Sir John Donne accompanied Edward into exile in 1470.
[177] Smith. 33.
[178] Hall. 264.
[179] Commynes. 181.
[180] Appendix A.
[181] Keith Dockray. *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV*. Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1988. 23-49.
[182] Dockray. 26.

From this contract, we see Hastings as powerful and opportunistic, contracting a marriage in return for half of Elizabeth Woodville's profits - a pecuniary interest in her introduction to Edward. As Lord Chamberlain, Hastings controlled access to the king so had the means to do so, although he imposed harsh terms on her, and she may have continued to resent this. If Hastings supported Edward's marriage, he was opposing his brother-in-law, Warwick. The marriage goes against Warwick's wishes, resulting ultimately in his rebellion, the end of Edward's first reign and his exile, with Hastings, to Flanders. This outcome could not have been contemplated by Hastings when he made the contract, but it was to have far reaching consequences.

3. Hastings' Last Will and Testament

Hastings' last will and testament[183] was signed and sealed on 27 June 1481 when he was aged about 50. His family was complete, and he was survived by his wife Katherine, sons Edward, Richard and William and daughter Anne. There is no mention of any illegitimate children, despite being accused of being 'secretly familiar' with Edward in his various indiscretions.[184] Even Richard of Gloucester acknowledged two illegitimate children, but there is no evidence in the form of offspring of any dalliances of William Hastings. In 1481-82, Hastings seems to have lost favour with Edward IV, when he was removed as Master of the Mint and had a public spat with Thomas, Marquess of Dorset and Anthony Woodville, brother of Queen Elizabeth. He might have feared that his position was less secure, prompting the writing of the will.

[183] Nichols. *Testamenta Vetusta.* 368-375.
[184] More. 11.

The will was known to Richard III who gave permission for Hastings' burial in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. This is remarkable considering that Richard had executed him for treason. Yet Hastings was not attainted, and his wife Katherine was placed under Richard's personal protection. The will opens with his burial in St. George's Chapel:

> And, forasmoche as the Kyng, of his abundant grace, for the trew service that I have doon, and at the leest entended to have doon, to his grace, hath willed and offred me to be buryed in the Church or Chapel of Seynt George at Wyndesore, in a place by his grace assigned in which College his highness is disposed to be buryed; I therefore bequeath my simple body to be buryed in the sayd Chapell and College in the said place, and wolle that there be ordeigned a tumbe convenient for me by myne executors; and for the costs of the same I bequeath c marks.[185]

Only kings, queens and royal relatives were buried in the Chapel, so there can be no greater accolade for Hastings' 'trew service' than to be buried next to his king.

Over half the will details obsequies and services that Hastings wished to have performed in his memory. There is a long list of religious houses and priests who received bequests to fund masses, obits and other religious rites, including the request that his executors 'shall make a thousand prestes say a thousand Placebo and Dirige, with M (a thousand) masses for my sowle'.[186] Is this an excess of piety or an excess of concern about the state of his immortal soul surfacing disquiet over guilty sins such as the killing of Prince Edward at Tewkesbury? Masses were essential to ease the soul's passage through purgatory, but

[185] Nichols. 370-371.
[186] Nichols. 370-371.

the number is not so unusual – in John Morton's will he requested that masses were sung for twenty years following his death.[187]

The second half of the will bequeaths his lands in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, Derby, Sussex and Middlesex, giving an indication of the extent of his influence and land ownership. From a lowly squire, he had become a great magnate. It is clear that he has deliberately left lands to Katheryn 'myn entyerly beloved wyffe' which consolidate her position around their homes at Ashby de la Zouch and Kirby Muxloe.

A specific request to the king is unusual. Hastings asks Edward to look after his son:

> I, in most humble wise, beseche the King's grace to take the governaunce of my son and heir; as is straitly as to me is possible, I charge myne heir, on my blessing, to be faythfull and true to the King's grace, to my lord Prince, and their heires.[188]

With the phrase 'as is straitly as to me is possible', Hastings is saying that, because they were close, Edward would know how he wished his son to be raised. Edward had written a specific ordinance for the raising of his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, at Ludlow.[189] Hastings is probably referring to this document, which they may have compiled together. Hastings is not asking the king; he is asking his best friend, a joint commitment – you look after my son, and I will look after yours. Given Hastings' execution, it is noteworthy that he commits his son to loyalty not just to King Edward, but the Prince (Edward V) and their

[187] Clive Burgess. 'Late Medieval Wills and Pious Conventions: testamentary evidence reconsidered', in M Hicks ed. *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Late Medieval England,* Gloucester, Sutton, 1990. 14-33.
[188] Nichols. 374.
[189] *Regulation Of A Prince's Household And Education, 1473*. https://thehistoryofengland.co.uk/resource/regulation-of-a-princes-household-and-education/

future heirs. It is a promise that Hastings will never waver in his loyalty to Edward V, even if he knows about the Talbot precontract. The will is effectively a 'deal' between the two men. In the notes to Testamenta Vetusta, Nichols reflects the popular opinion of Hastings in 1826:

> His fidelity to the son of the sovereign by whom he had been advanced to honours is immortalized by Shakspeare, and his name is consequently so familiar to every reader that it is needless to say any thing more about so celebrated a personage.[190]

This demonstrates how deeply portrayals by More and Shakespeare had been absorbed into the national consciousness, and in what high regard Hastings was held for his loyalty.

In the tradition of noble wills, Hastings appoints two legal executors and two 'surveyors' – John Morton, Bishop of Ely, who was in the room at the Tower when Hastings was condemned to death, and John, Lord Dynham, later Captain of Calais and linked to the Yorkist cause since Edward and Warwick fled from Ludford Bridge in 1459.

Finally, Hastings includes an extraordinary clause, saying 'I did wryte thys clause and last artycle wyth myn own hand'. It is addressed directly to Edward IV who:

> I beseche to be good and tender and gracious Lord to my sowle, to be good and gracious Soverayne Lord to my wyfe, my son, and myn eyre, and to all my children, whom I charge upon my blessing to be true sogetts and servants to you my Soverayne Lord under God, and to your eyre, and all your issue; and beseche you,

[190] Nichols. 368.

> Soverayne Lord, also to be good Lord to my surveyors and executors in executing this my last wyll and testament, as my most synguler trust is in your good grace before all earthly greatnesse, as wele for my wyfe and chyldren, and to my executors and surveyors in executing this my last wyll and testament.[191]

Would any other courtier have been so bold as to address his sovereign so directly in his will? Whilst a necessary legal document, the will is a vehicle for Hastings to express how his wishes to be remembered and make a final plea of loyalty. This legacy is given physical form in the chantry chapel at St. George's Chapel, highly decorated and elaborate, next to his beloved Edward.

4. <u>The Will of Lady Katherine Hastings - 22nd November 1503</u>

Given William's use of his will as a 'contract' with the king, his wife's will is both modest and low key in contrast. Born in 1442, Katherine Neville was the sister of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, and she married William Bonville, 6th Baron Harington, another Yorkist, in 1458, aged 14. Their daughter Cecily Bonville was born on 30 June 1460. William Bonville died alongside Richard, Duke of York at Wakefield on 30 December 1460. Katherine's brother Warwick negotiated her second marriage to Hastings in 1462 at a time when Hastings was in the ascendency. It was a great match for Hastings, who became the stepfather of Cecily, the Bonville heir, and also a 'safe haven' for Katherine, a young widow with a six month old daughter.

[191] Nichols. 368.

Katherine died between November 1503 and March 1504, surviving William by twenty years. The will conjures a picture of a noble lady living at Kirby Muxloe castle, where she bequeaths 'all the hangings of saye (silk) which be at Kerbye now'.[192] She spends her time concerned with the running of the estate, making provision for the hay harvest and making specific bequests of gowns to her ladies and liveries to her grooms, by name. They are valued household servants, and no-one is forgotten:

> I woll that my household be fully contented and paid for their whole quarter's wages to be finished at Christmas next, and all such wages that has been unpaid unto them; over this I woll that every oon of my gentlemen shall have thirteen shillings four pence (a mark); and every yeoman ten shillings; and every groom six shillings eight pence.[193]

Cecily receives a bed, bedcovers and tabulet (jewel) in full settlement of 'certain sumes of money, which I have borrowed of her at diverse times',[194] but beyond this Cecily inherits very little and her fourteen children are not mentioned. Perhaps Katherine considered that she was already rich enough? She concentrates her bequests on Hastings' surviving children, Edward, Richard and William and daughter Anne. Most bequests are beds and bedlinen, but the sons are given cushions 'with my lord's armes'.[195] In the twenty years since Hastings' death, Katherine had not remarried, but enjoyed her lands whilst Edward succeeded to the Barony of Hastings. Her will shows her continued devotion to William, with provision for prayers for 'my ffadyr and my lady my modar, my lord my husband's

[192] David Baldwin. *The Kingmaker's Sisters - Six Powerful Women in the Wars of the Roses*. Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2009. 150.
[193] Baldwin. 150-151.
[194] Baldwin. 150-151.
[195] Baldwin. 150-151.

soules' as well as her own. [196] She had a reputation for piety, left little finery, but had a detailed knowledge of the people who worked for her in the household or estates and of the husbandry of the farming year. She was not a frequent visitor to court, but she does leave 'a faire Prymar, which I had by the yefture (gift) of queen Elizabeth',[197] presumably Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII.

There are special mentions for the priests, the churches, and Lincoln Cathedral. She does not appoint external executors but leaves equal responsibility to her surviving children. It is the voice of a mother urging them to perform their duties properly!

> And for the true execution and performance of this my present testament and last will, I make and ordain Ceicill marquiss Dorset, widdow, George, earl of Shrewsbury and Anne his wife, my daughter, Edward lord Hastings, Richard Hastings, and William Hastings, esquires, my sons, myne executors; most humbly beseeching and praying them, in the way of charity, to take the peyne and labour for the true performance of the same, as myn special trust is in them. [198]

The tone suggests a happy marriage and a faithful wife devoted to the smooth running of the estates, whilst her husband was often away.

These four legal documents expose different aspects of Hastings' character. In the Indenture, we see his 'hands on' approach and grasp of detail, trusted by Edward with the execution of Yorkist policy essential to the recovery of the economy. The speed with

[196] Baldwin. 147.
[197] Baldwin. 148.
[198] Baldwin. 151.

which the recoinages took place suggests that Hastings, guiding Edward, was familiar with the policies that Richard, Duke of York, would have implemented had he lived. Close to Edward in policy, he was also close in his private life, and in all probability the instigator by introduction of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. The strict terms of the marriage contract show a shrewd and opportunistic businessman, consistent with the competent administrator who executed the recoinages, but potentially kindling the resentment reflected in the later animosity with the Woodville family.

In his own will, there is a focus on piety with the 'thousand' masses, alongside three unusual pleas in recognition of his service, directed to a friend and a sovereign. He knows that Edward would know how to raise his son, because they had worked on the ordinance for the Prince of Wales together. It is an unequivocal statement of his loyalty, but is a two-way deal. The legacy of his loyalty is sealed with his burial next to his king, and permitted by Richard III even though he had just brought about his untimely end.

Finally, through Katherine's will, we get a small glimpse of his home life, surrounded by cushions displaying his arms and remembered affectionately by the wife who never remarried, despite being a noblewoman in her own right, the sister of the Earl of Warwick.

Original material written by Hastings himself is scarce, and, as such, what we generally know of his life and character is gleaned from other sources and other writers. From the letters of 1463 and 1477, through the marriage contract and indenture to the wills of both William and Katherine, these two chapters have drawn together a body of work which has

not been assessed before as a ‘collection’. The legal texts are private rather than public; hence they give more depth of insight than perhaps the diplomatic letters which Hastings almost certainly expected to be read by spies. It is important to assess what Hastings says in his own words because it gives a base of knowledge against which the words of other writers can be judged. Both the letters and the legal documents show that Hastings valued his name, position and public image, and his will reflects his wish to preserve his reputation for loyalty and consolidate his position as the king’s right hand man. Whatever happened in his final days, following the death of Edward, the physical embodiment of this loyalty survives today in the chantry chapel at St. George’s, Windsor.

5: Building a reputation: Hastings in the Medieval Chronicles

Hastings signed his own name to his letters, but other writers record the major events of the time. Several chronicles cover the 'Wars of the Roses', occasionally mentioning Hastings by name and illustrating the political and cultural landscape in which he was operating. These chronicles chart Hastings' remarkable rise from an insignificant member of the gentry, albeit the son of a distinguished knight, to his ennoblement as Baron Hastings, recognised as the king's right-hand man. They record his heroic feats and give a glimpse into the attributes and capabilities that enabled his rapid rise and led to his emergence as a trusted commander with a reputation for military prowess. Carpenter bemoaned the fifteenth century chronicles as ''largely devoid of any explanation for what happened.'[199] However, they do give an account of the major events and historical context and thus provide a starting point for charting both Hastings' career and also his portrayal by the writers who follow.

William's family background gives an important context to his military career. His father, Sir Leonard Hastings, had fought at Agincourt, then served under Richard, Duke of York, in France. York was dismayed by the loss of France by Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. The Yorkists considered the French as enemies and that the territories rightfully belonged to the English Crown. This view must have permeated the Hastings household, echoing down the years and potentially influencing Hastings in favour of an alliance with the Burgundians against France. William followed his father into York's service, training in military, diplomatic and administrative skills at Fotheringhay in Northamptonshire, not far

[199] Carpenter. 4.

from the Hastings' estate at Ashby-de-la-Zouche. His affinity with York was to influence his later actions, and, in his Calais letters,[200] he refers back to this relationship, which seems to be the core tenet of his life. His educational attainment is shown in his letters, and his cultural taste apparent in the commissioning of works such as his beautiful Book of Hours.[201] Training as a knight was not just about military skills, it was a well-rounded education in chivalry, art, law, diplomacy, culture, codes of conduct, values and behaviour, and this sets the context for his rise to prominence.

The First Battle of St. Albans, 22nd May 1455.

Hastings is not recorded at the first Battle of St. Albans, but might have been among York's 'diuerse knyghtes & squyers'.[202] Prior to the battle, the Yorkists marched down the Great North Road, passing Hastings' lands in Leicestershire. Feasibly, both father and son could have joined the muster. A short, single issue manuscript, written directly after the battle appears to be an eye-witness account, noting that York declared his loyalty to the King 'payng & beseekyng hym to take hym as his true man and humble suget',[203] but that he wanted Somerset executed. In a letter to Henry, York demands 'surrender to us such as we will accuse, and not to resist til we have him which deserves death.'[204] Henry VI is reported to have rejected York's plea and threatened those who raised a banner against him:

> And by the feyth that I owe to Seynt Edward and to the corone of Inglond, I shall destrye them euery moder sone, and they be hanged and drawen & quartered

[200] See Chapter 2
[201] Backhouse. *The Hastings Hours*. London: The British Library, 1996.
[202] Embrell and Tavormina. 93. l14.
[203] Embrell and Tavormina. 93. L24-25.
[204] Haigh. 3–7.

> that may be taken afterward of them to haue ensample to alle such traytours to be war to make ony such rysyng of peple withinne my lond.[205]

This presents Henry as uncharacteristically warlike, contrasting with his reputation as pious and saintly. York is presented as a noble knight who prefers death to dishonour in the chivalric tradition, 'And therefore, sythe yt wole be no one othere wyse but that we shall vtterly dye, bettere yt ys to dye in the feld than cowardly to be put to a grete rebuke and a shameful deth.'[206]

The sense of *The First Battle of St Albans* is that York was morally correct, acted like a noble and loyal knight, removed the 'evil' counsellors,[207] and restored the position of both the king and Parliament. The account is designed to justify his actions. It shows the skill with which York puts his case and manages the news channels both before and after the battle. Hastings would have been caught up in the propaganda of the 'just' war and the chivalric ideal. If this was his first military experience, he would have witnessed the quick thinking and bravery of the Earl of Warwick, without whom the Yorkists might have been defeated. After his father's death, William was granted an annuity of £10 by the Duke of York, confirming that he was a retainer. His brothers Richard and Ralph followed, serving until the decisive battle at Tewkesbury in 1471. In the years 1455-1459, William assumed his father's responsibilities and consolidated his position as head of the family. He succeeded his father as ranger of York's chase of Wyre, Shropshire and was pricked as

[205] Embrell and Tavormina. 94.
[206] Embrell and Tavormina. 95.
[207] Somerset was killed in the battle

sheriff of Warwick and Leicester.[208] He is trusted with public office, but there is no indication of any special favour, as these appointments are his father's legacy.

Gregory's Chronicle[209] and The Rout of Ludford Bridge

When Queen Margaret called a great council in June 1459, she did not invite the Duke of York or the Earl of Warwick, who guessed the council intended to charge them with treason. York mustered his forces, including Hastings, and Warwick, as Captain of Calais, returned to England with the garrison of highly trained and experienced soldiers under Andrew Trollope. Despite King Henry's speech at St. Albans, he was not known as a military man and the Yorkists had not anticipated that he would take to the battlefield himself. Fighting against the person of the king was regarded as sacrilegious[210] as well as treason. Soldiers began to desert to avoid fighting against him, and this included Andrew Trollope who:

> consayvyd the Erle of Warwyke was goyng vnto the Duke of Yorke and not vnto the kynge, and vtterly forsoke hym and come vnto the kynge and was pardonyd; and that made the duke fulle sore afrayde when he wyste that sum olde soudyers went from hym vnto the kynge.[211]

The Yorkists quit the field during the night when they realised they could not win. The Duke of York fled to Ireland with his second son Edmund. Edward, Earl of March, with Warwick 'departid into Devinshire & from thens into Garnesey and so to Calais', according to another chronicle, known as 'Hearne's fragment'.[212] Hastings did not go with them

[208] Horrox. ODNB https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12588
[209] Embrell and Tavormina. 53-91.
[210] The King was regarded as appointed by God.
[211] Embrell and Tavormina. 65.
[212] Embrell and Tavormina. 99.

showing that he was not yet in the inner circle, but returned to Leicestershire, seeking a pardon from the king. York left his wife Cecily and younger children behind - George (later Clarence) and Richard (later Gloucester), who would have witnessed some violent scenes:

> The mysrewle of the kynges galentys at Ludlowe, whenn they had drokyn inowe of wyne that was in tauernys and in othyr placys, they fulle vngoodely smote out the heddys of the pypse and hogges-hedys of wyne, that men went wete-scode in wyne, and then they robbyd the towne, and bare awaye beddynge, clothe, and othyr stuffe, and defoulyd many wym-men.[213]

Gregory's Chronicle builds the reputation of the Lancastrian armies as perpetrators of ungodly behaviour. Whilst it might be factually accurate, it represents a Yorkist perspective. As this reputation grows it acts as a deterrent, and in 1460, when the Lancastrian force of Scots and French mercenaries approaches London, the city bars its gates to them in fear, enabling Edward to enter London and take the crown.

Hastings was an inconspicuous retainer, but there is a sudden and marked change in his fortunes between the Rout of Ludford Bridge (1459) and the victory at Towton (1461). Hastings potentially met Edward (b. 1442) at Fotheringhay. Hastings was ten years older, more experienced and able to act as an advisor. Later, Edward records that 'from his early manhood he has never ceased to serve us.'[214] They would have heard the Yorkists leaders' discussions on the political situation, international diplomacy, and the strategies of war. William potentially tutored the elder sons of York before they were sent to Ludlow,

[213] Embrell and Tavormina. 67.
[214] Seward. 95.

resulting in Edward referring to his 'good example'.[215] Back in Leicestershire, Hastings raised a considerable personal retinue.[216] We have no record of him at the battle of Northampton in 1460, but, as with the battle of St. Albans, it was so close to his homelands that it is unlikely that he did not join the Yorkist forces. Northampton was the first time Edward, aged 18, fought in combat, starting his remarkable record of being undefeated on the battlefield.

Warwick captured Henry VI at Northampton and returned to London. Queen Margaret and her son Edward escaped to Wales. Edward left Warwick's side as an independent commander, emboldened by his first battle, and headed west to recruit troops and prepare to tackle Margaret's forces. Hastings was either with Edward at that time, or on his way to join him. Whilst spending Christmas in Gloucester, Edward learnt of the death of his father, at Wakefield on 30th December 1460. His head had been placed on a spike over Micklegate in York along with the heads of his son, Rutland, and father, Salisbury. Under the Act of Accord,[217] Edward was now heir to the throne. As Queen Margaret's troops marched towards London, Edward prepared to meet them, but first he had to turn north to cut off Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Wiltshire.

Mortimer's Cross: 3rd February 1461

The two forces met at Mortimer's Cross, not far from Edward's lands in the Marches. It is famous for the appearance of a parhelion – a natural phenomenon where, in early

[215] Desmond Seward. *The Wars of the Roses: Through the lives of five men and women of the fifteenth century.* London: Constable and Company, 1995. 95
[216] Dunham. *Indentured Retainers.*
[217] Act of Accord. Henry will rule during his lifetime, but York and his heirs will succeed to the throne. *Act of Parliament 39 Hen. 6 given Royal Assent 25th October 1460*

morning mist and light, the sun appears as three suns. Edward seized the moment to announce to his troops that it was a sign that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were with them that day, showing quick thinking and his ability to rally his troops. He later adopting the 'sun in splendour' as one of his main badges:

> Allesoo the same day that the Erle of Marche shulde take hys jornaye toware Mortymerys Crosse fro Hereforde Este, he mousterd hys many whytheowte the towne wallys in a mersche that ys callyd Wyg Mersche. And ouyr hym men say iij sonnys schynyng.[218]

Accounts of the battle are scant, and Hastings is not mentioned. However, he must have played an important role as his deeds against the Earls of Pembroke and Wiltshire are highlighted when he is raised to the peerage twelve months later. Desmond Seward notes that William Hastings had a talent for raising troops and surmises – 'the number and quality of those whom he brought to Mortimer's Cross may well have tipped the odds in favour of the Yorkists. Afterwards Edward referred to 'a plentiful multitude' (*multitudine copiosa*), and implied that they were expensively equipped. It was the start of William's rise to fame and fortune'.[219] Hastings had spent the years since his father's death honing his military, leadership and strategic skills and building his retinue, which had become a force to be reckoned with.

In the meantime, Edward met up with Warwick and they marched to London.[220] The city was relieved not to have been attacked by Queen Margaret's northern marauders, whose

[218] Embrell and Tavormina. 71.
[219] Seward. 75.
[220] Embrell and Tavormina. 73.

dire reputation had been built by Yorkist propaganda. The Yorkists needed a king,[221] so they proceeded to crown Edward, 'by the grace of God, of England, France and Ireland a true and just heir'.[222] On 4th March 1461, Edward entered the Palace of Westminster 'where in the Great Hall the king's robes were placed upon him and he took the oath before those assembled; he was then formally acclaimed King of England'.[223] Gregory reports that the city cheered:

> 'Lette vs walke in a newe wyneyerde, and let vs make vs a gay gardon in the monythe of Marche whythe thys fayre whyte ros and herbe, the Erle of Marche'.[224]

Howard's Chronicle also records this event,[225] and it is fairly certain that Hastings was a witness.

The Battle of Towton

The Lancastrian army moved north to York. Edward's followers travelled to their heartlands to raise forces – on his march north Hastings would have stopped by his Leicestershire lands to re-equip and refresh his troops. When the Yorkists arrived in Pontefract, they found that the Lancastrians had taken up a position on a plain between the villages of Saxton and Towton. At Ferrybridge, Warwick was unexpectedly attacked by Lord Clifford and Sir John Neville, forcing the Yorkists back across the bridge. Warwick suffered an arrow wound to the thigh, but ever conscious of the morale of his troops, he

[221] Henry VI had been freed at St. Albans
[222] Ross. *Edward IV*. 33.
[223] Haigh. *Military Campaigns.* 55.
[224] Embrell and Tavormina. 73.
[225] 'theruppon a counceile was callid, whereas Kyng Harry for his imbecillite & insufficiens was by the hole hows deposid, and Edward, eldest son of Richard, late Duke of Yorke, by the hole assent & concent of all th'assistentes, there elect and solemply choisin for King of Englond, then being of the age almost xx.' Embrell and Tavormina. 100.

drew his sword and slew his own horse with the words 'Flee if you will but I will tarry with he who will tarry with me'.[226] It set the tone for the battle of Towton, which took place on 29th March, Palm Sunday 1461, resulting in the largest loss of life ever seen on a battlefield in England. Howard's Chronicle records: 'This feelde was sore fouȝten. For there were slayne on bothe partyes xxxiij m (33,000) men, and all of the season it snew.'[227]

Young King Edward, over six feet tall and looking every inch the warrior knight, rode up and down the lines to encourage his men and dismounted as Warwick had done when the line looked like breaking. Hastings must have been close by and witnessed this. The Yorkists were under severe pressure, but in the middle of the afternoon Norfolk arrived, with fresh troops who could engage the exhausted Lancastrians. Warwick and Edward gave orders to spare the common man but not the lords. There was to be no chivalric mercy, resulting in a huge loss of Lancastrian nobility. Some forty-two captured knights were executed, although the Duke of Somerset escaped to York with King Henry and Queen Margaret who then reached safety in Scotland.

On the Lancastrians' right was a small stream called the River Cock, where heavy losses occurred, and the spot is known today as 'The Bloody Meadow'. In the aftermath of the battle Fabyan reports

[226] Hall. 255.
[227] Embrell and Tavormina. 101.

> afftyr a sore & long & unkeyndly ffygth ffor there was the Sone again the ffadyr, The broþyr again the brothyr, The Nevew again Nevew, The victory ffyll unto kyng Edward.[228]

He provides an extended description compared to the shorter references in Shakespeare's more usual sources, Hall and Holinshed, suggesting that Shakespeare did have access to this earlier work.

William Hastings had fought alongside King Edward and made his mark - he was first to be knighted on the battlefield and now Sir William Hastings began his rapid rise to fame and fortune. Shortly after Edward IV's coronation he was raised to the peerage as Baron Hastings. The patent recording this is notable for its warmth. The detail of his military engagement with Pembroke and Wiltshire harks back to the battle of Mortimer's Cross, the only reference to his participation there, as well as his service at Towton:

> Calling to mind the honourable service, probity and valiant deeds of our dearly beloved William Hastynges, our chamberlain, we wish to raise him to the rank of baron and peer of our realm, as much for his martial exploits as for his good example and good counsel. We particularly single out how the said William with a large force of his servants, friends and well-wishers (*benivolorum*) did at heavy and burdensome cost and at manifold peril expose himself most courageously and shrewdly in our service in campaigns and battles against our arch-enemy the former pretended king of England, 'Henry the Sixth', with his accomplices and abettors, notably Jasper Pembroke and James Wiltshire, formerly earls, who

[228] Fabyan. 197.

> together with other traitors and rebels waged war on us. From his early manhood he has never ceased to serve us….[229]

It is the first written account of Hastings' character. He is not just a military hero, but valued for his honourable service, probity, good example and counsel. He is courageous and shrewd, not afraid to expose himself to peril. By 'shrewd' Edward refers to his strategic awareness, drawing attention to his large body of retainers, who he equipped at 'heavy and burdensome cost'. Edward grants the peerage by choice and in gratitude. It summarises and recognises his reputation as an accomplished chivalric knight.

At this point it is worth taking stock of the military culture of the time. Traditionally, forces were raised under the old feudal system and there was no professional 'English' army except the Calais Garrison. Forces were the private armies of the nobles. Traditional feudalism secured the loyalty of knights and soldiers through the patronage of the Lord, through the granting of lands and the administration of the local area. The lords also built up their power bases through marriage and inherited familial loyalties, but in the melange of Lancaster versus York, this proved less effective. Men began to be indentured to a lord with a promise to support him in battle and the lord undertaking to support the retainer should he need it, for example in disputes over land. Lords then began to sign up retainers with annuity payments, such as the £10 annuity granted by Richard, Duke of York to the young William Hastings. Michael Hicks has described this evolution as 'Bastard Feudalism':

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[229] Seward. 95. Transcribed from George Cockayne and Vicary Gibbs ed. *Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct or Dormant.* 6 of 13 vols. London: St. Catherine's Press, 1959. Vol. 6. 371.

> Where Feudalism reserved service and allegiance to the kin, Bastard Feudalism need not. Where feudal ties were clear, public and honourable, bastard feudal ties were ill-defined and morally uncertain. Instead of hereditary tenancies, Bastard Feudalism consisted to payments of cash for short terms that were easily terminated.[230]

During the fifteenth century there was essentially a mixed model. The nobles maintained a core set of allegiances but were able to sign up retainers in return for patronage. This is the retainer model used by Hastings – their service in return for his 'good lordship'. His grasp of the structural change in society prompts him to build his fighting force. When he becomes Lord Chamberlain, his 'good lordship' is worth much more and people flocked to him.

Traditionally, the lord provided full livery, the 'heavy and burdensome cost' noted by Edward above. Gregory observes:

> And hyr mayny and euery lordys men bare hyr lordys leuerey, that euery man myghte knowe hys owne feleschippe by hys lyuerey.'[231]

The new class of retainers began to use badges as a symbol of affinity as a much cheaper option. Today, the Wars of the Roses is known as a fight between the red rose (Lancaster) and the white rose (York). There is little evidence for this at the time, although Gregory calls Edward 'thys fayre whyte ros'[232] and he is also dubbed the 'Rose of Rouen' in a popular contemporary ballad.[233] This poem shows Hastings' standing with the general

[230] Hicks. 14-15.
[231] Embrell and Tavormina. 71.
[232] Embrell and Tavormina. 73.
[233] '*The Rose of Rouen*' in Kingsford. 247-8. *Trinity Coll. Dublin MS.432*

public and mentions his reputation as 'The Black Bull'[234] who 'hym-self he wold not hyde'.[235] Hastings chose the bull as the 'battle badge' for his retainers, reflecting strength, bravery, and the active management of his 'brand'.

The War in the North (1461-64)

Although the chronicles barely mention Hastings before Towton, once he becomes Lord Hastings they take note, recording his military prowess and the power of his name. After Towton, Lancastrian forces laid siege to castles in the north – Alnwick, Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. Alnwick surrendered to Hastings, recorded in Howard's Chronicle:

> Sir Piers the Brasy .... stale by treason the Castell of Awnewyke. Whithir were sent against him Sir William, Lorde Hastynges, and with him were Sir John Hawarde and dyuers lordis and jentilmen, & with a strong power bisegid the castell, in the which tyme Sir Piers had many iniorious woordis against thois lordis, the which no3withstanting, he was fain to fall to agreement. Whereuppon such pointment made, he with his Frenchmen and Scottis departid...[236]

Robert Fabyan records Edward's trust in Hastings:

> Remembryng how his Rebellys held contrary his pleasure & honour, his Castellys & strong holdys In the North, he therfor sent thidyr more strength & held theym more streygth, by the manhood of lord Hastyngys. To whoom the kyng hadd commyttyd the Rule of hys Sowdyours, whych lastly by his provicion & ffyers assawtys cawsid the sayd Rebellys which held the Castell of awnewyk to yeld it up unto hym, & to put theym & theyr goodys In the kyngs grace & mercy .... soo soon

[234] The Black Bull is Hastings' symbol on his garter stall plate at Windsor.
[235] Kingsford. 247.
[236] Embrell and Tavormina. 103.

> as they knewe ... off the powar of the Inglysh men which were as yit undyr the Guydyng of the lord hastyngys, anoon they Retournyd withowth making of more besynes.'[237]

Hastings commands the soldiers, despite other nobles being present. His capability, bravery, his 'manhood', and his name is such that the Scots turn back rather than engage. As a body of work, the chronicles have built Hastings' reputation, from an unknown squire hardly worth a mention to the military hero knighted on the battlefield. As such, they justify his meteoric rise and public appointments that follow, based on his achievements and position rather than his lineage, the first shift in power towards the household rather than the nobility.

The first military period results in a massive loss of life at Towton. Chivalry as a noble code of conduct seems dead on the battlefield but survives in the person of Edward IV as the epitome of the chivalric knight, tall and handsome. He aims to save England from the usurper Lancastrian line and re-establish the noble blood and England's glory after the ignominious losses in France. Hastings has risen to become first a knight and then a baron, building a reputation as a ferocious fighter. He is a military leader appointed to command the king's forces and is appointed Lord Chamberlain and Master of the Mint, showing that he is valued for his executive abilities as well as his military exploits. His strategic vision and leadership resulted in his affinity becoming a decisive force in battle and this initiated a shift in the balance of power between the king's household and the nobles[238]. In 1471, Hastings provides 3,000 men to assist Edward in defeating the Earl of

[237] Fabyan. 199-200.
[238] D. A. L. Morgan, 'The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th, 23 (1973): 1–25.

Warwick.[239] Warwick is noble and powerful by birth, and as 'the kingmaker' believed he should govern through Edward. In contrast, Hastings owes everything to Edward, and the defeat of Warwick enables Edward to stand alone as the unassailable king of England, supported by his capable Chamberlain, by his side for twenty years.

[239] Embree and Tavormina. 157.

6: Late fifteenth century contemporaries: Philippe de Commynes and Dominico Mancini

By the 1480s, Edward IV had changed the power dynamics between the king's household and the nobles, stabilised the royal finances and implemented monetary policies which revitalised the English economy. Hastings was central to this transformation. Culturally, the Yorkists were close to Burgundy, one of the most lavish courts in Europe. Not only had Margaret, Edward's sister, married Charles of Burgundy, but Edward, Hastings, and Gloucester had spent time there in exile. English culture was transforming under the influence of the Burgundians and in literature the diary-like chronicles were beginning to be replaced by formats prescient of the Tudor age such as the biography of Commynes and the performance drama of Mancini. These two writers bridge the gap between the medieval chronicles and the historical drama of More, laying the foundation for Shakespeare.

Dominico Mancini and Phillipe de Commynes were both alive when Hastings was executed in 1483. Commynes' portrayal is based on his personal knowledge of Hastings, eyewitness testimony, and his own participation in some of the key events, related in his *Memoirs of Louis XI*.[240] His portrayal of Hastings is important because it deals with the English invasion of France (1475) and the diplomatic crisis of 1477. Commynes illustrates Hastings' character in biographical passages, but also uses him as a comparator to the character of Edward IV. Writing after Louis' death, Commynes makes much of his friendship with Hastings and takes the credit for making Hastings a pensioner,

[240] Philippe de Commynes, and Michael Jones trans. *Memoirs: The Reign of Louis XI 1461-1483.* London: Penguin, 1972.

aggrandising his previous importance at the French court at a time when he had lost his position under the new regime.

Current knowledge of Mancini dates from 1934 when a manuscript copy of *De Occupatione Regni Anglie*[241] was discovered in the library at Lille. Mancini was in London until July 1483 and claims to have used information from his own observation and reliable eyewitnesses. His account was originally verbal, until written down at Angelo Cato's[242] request in December 1483. Mancini relates Hastings' demise and provides the benchmark of the events of 1483. The two writers probably knew each other - they were both at the French court and both commissioned by Cato. Neither is trying to curry favour with the Tudors or influence the English, although they may have had a propaganda agenda in France. These are personal accounts and opinions based on contemporary evidence and hearsay and as such give a deeper insight into Hastings' character and motivations.

Philippe de Commynes

Commynes was born in Flanders and served Charles of Burgundy during Edward IV's exile, where he met Hastings. He later served Louis XI, and, after long service, wrote his *Memoirs* in 1498. Commynes states 'I do not wish to lie',[243] to propose that his account is accurate. He establishes his credentials 'from the time when I entered his service until the hour of his death, when I was present, I resided continually with him longer than anyone else, serving him at least in the capacity of a chamberlain and often being occupied in his

[241] *Lille, Bibliothèque municipal manuscript Godefroy 022, 1.*
[242] Angelo Cato, Bishop of Vienne.
[243] Commynes, 57.

most important business.'[244] This declaration positions Commynes in the tradition of the chronicles, but his work is closer to a biography, since he is interested in the personalities and values of the characters as well as the actions that he observes. He claims 'one can easily form an opinion on their character and circumstances'.[245]

Commynes refers to Edward, who:

> had with him a very experienced knight called Lord Hastings, Lord Chamberlain of England, who was his chief adviser and was married to the earl of Warwick's sister. Yet he remained faithful to his master and contributed more than three thousand horsemen to the army, as he told me himself.[246]

It is a short introduction to Hastings' character but shows the regard in which he was held. When Warwick, who had 'governed King Edward in his youth and directed his affairs'[247] ousted Edward, Hastings was conflicted, being Warwick's brother-in-law. Commynes values his loyalty to King Edward, despite adversity, when he could easily switch sides. Commynes admires Hastings for placing loyalty to the king above family interest, showing higher principles and integrity.

Commynes relates his conversations with the English king: 'King Edward told me that, in all the battles he had won, as soon as he could sense victory, he rode around ordering the saving of the common soldiers, though he ordered the killing of all the nobles, few if any of whom escaped.'[248] Writing after Edward's death, he is not beyond poking a little fun at him: 'He was young and more handsome than any man alive. I say he was at the time of

[244] Commynes. 57.
[245] Commynes. 58.
[246] Commynes. 187.
[247] Commynes. 413.
[248] Commynes. 187.

this adventure (1470) because later he became very fat.'[249] Commynes lost respect for him based on his personal values and behaviour; 'he thought of nothing else but women.'[250] This is in contrast to Hastings, whose higher principles Commynes continues to applaud, both during the invasion of France in 1475 and the diplomatic crisis of 1477. His treatment of Hastings on these two occasions puts clear water between the two men.

In 1475, Edward IV invaded France with a large force including Hastings, Gloucester and Clarence, resulting in the Treaty of Picquigny. Edward agreed not to fight in return for an annual pension of 50,000 crowns and an agreement for the Dauphin to marry his daughter Elizabeth. Commynes' opinion of Edward is already waning as the two kings meet on the bridge, he:

> wore a black velvet cap on his head decorated with a large jewelled fleur-de-lis of precious stones. He was a very good-looking, tall prince, but he was beginning to get fat, and I had seen him on previous occasions looking more handsome.[251]

Commynes suggests that Edward is now all for show. The allusion to his girth suggests a physical decline, not unlike his future grandson Henry VIII. As gluttony was one of the seven deadly sins, it was a moral as well as a physical judgement. In contrast, Commynes shows that Hastings still values his moral standing:

> It was difficult to persuade the Lord Chamberlain to become a pensioner. He did so eventually through me because I had helped to make him friendly with Duke Charles of Burgundy, whom I was serving at the time. Charles gave him a pension of a thousand crowns a year. I told the King about this and likewise pleased him

[249] Commynes. 188.
[250] Commynes. 188.
[251] Commynes. 258.

> for I should be his agent to make him his friend and servant, for previously he had always been his great enemy, both while the duke was alive and after his death, for he supported the lady of Burgundy and if it had been up to him England would have helped her against the King. So I began this friendship by writing letters and the King gave him a pension of two thousand crowns, double what the duke of Burgundy had given him.[252]

Commynes claims credit for making Hastings a pensioner through their friendship. The passage could imply that Hastings was too principled to be bribed, reflecting Commynes' respect for him, or that he was merely negotiating the fee, since he gets double what he had received from Charles of Burgundy. Hastings manages his public image:

> Pierre Claret was a very clever man. He had a private conversation alone with the Lord Chamberlain in his room in London. When he told him whatever it was necessary to say and, on the King's behalf, presented him with the two thousand crowns in gold (for the King never gave money to great foreign lords in any other type of coin) and after the Chamberlain had received this money, Pierre Clairet asked him to sign a quittance so that he himself could be quit. Lord Hastings prevaricated. Clairet then asked him again simply to give him a letter three lines long addressed to the King, saying that he had received the money, which would serve as a quittance for him to the King, his master, so that he would not think that Clairet had robbed him of it, because the King was somewhat suspicious by nature. When the Chamberlain saw that Clairet's request was entirely proper he

[252] Commynes. 359-360.

> said, 'Master Clairet, what you say is quite reasonable, but this gift comes freely from your master, the King. I didn't ask for it. If it pleases you that I should take it you can put it here in my sleeve, but you'll get neither letter nor quittance from me because I don't want people to say of me 'The Lord Chamberlain of England was the King of France's pensioner,' nor do I want my quittances to be found in his *Chambres des comptes'*. Clairet said no more, left him the money and came back to report to the King, who was very angry that he had not brought the quittance. But he praised the Chamberlain for his action and respected him more than all the other servants of the king of England. Thereafter the Chamberlain was always paid without him giving a quittance.[253]

Hastings has not fallen into Louis' trap. His reputation could be destroyed by evidence of the pension being found in Louis' counting house. There are two ways that this can be interpreted – Hastings wants a covert pension, the equivalent today of a 'brown paper bag' bribe, or his chivalric values have been challenged by Edward's Treaty so that he wants no evidence of the stain upon his character. Hastings' reputation is enhanced by this incident, resulting in the king of France's respect. Commynes was not present during this conversation, so why does he include it? He is repeating the words of Pierre Claret as verbatim speech, as if he were an eyewitness. Commynes views the Treaty, and the pensions, as dishonourable, and that the English were outwitted by the French. By including this passage, he compares Edward, who can be tricked, with his loyal and

[253] Commynes. 360.

principled Chamberlain, who cannot. By enhancing Hastings' reputation, Commynes also enhances his own, as the persuader, pointing out how useful he was as a royal courtier.

In 1477, when Hastings was in Calais, Commynes reports that the English allowed the French to take the towns around Calais because 'the intelligence and understanding of our King greatly exceeded that of the reigning English king, Edward IV'.[254] Louis knew that Edward wanted to maintain his pension and achieve the marriage of Elizabeth to the Dauphin, and this may explain the apparent indecision or time-wasting shown in Hastings' letters from Calais. Commynes considers that Edward does not have the experience or ability to deal with this diplomatic crisis. Whilst he maintains Hastings' reputation as a supporter of Burgundy, Edward is considered reliant on the Treaty of Picquigny. When it is repudiated by the marriage of the Dauphin to Marguerite of Flanders, Commynes reports:

> Whoever else was pleased by this marriage, the King of England was bitterly upset, for he felt greatly disgraced and mocked by it and feared very much that he would lose his pension (or tribute as the English called it) from the King. He was also afraid that contempt for him in England would be so great that there would be a rebellion against him, especially because he had refused to believe his advisers. ..... as soon as he received news of the marriage, he fell ill and died shortly afterwards though some said it was of apoplexy.[255]

Commynes criticises Edward for not listening to his councillors, and he surely means Hastings. Commynes lost respect for Edward and links his death to his mismanagement of

[254] Commynes. 358.
[255] Commynes. 396.

the diplomatic situation, but he maintains a picture of Hastings as a noble knight, loyal and principled. Whilst it serves Commynes' purpose to portray Hastings in this way, it is a portrait from a contemporary who knew Hastings over two decades. The anecdotes used by Commynes add realism to his characterisation and it is difficult to doubt that these events took place. He uses his friendship with Hastings for political ends, but also to enhance his own standing as an advisor to Louis XI. He equates their positions as right hand men to the crowns of England and France – the nobility of Hastings reflecting the nobility of Philippe de Commynes.

Dominico Mancini

Unlike Commynes, Mancini did not know Hastings in person, but gained his information from a number of sources. A. J. Pollard[256] argues that Mancini was sent to London as a spy to find out if England was likely to declare war on France. Mancini notes 'Edward IV died because 'the Flemings, towards whom his support secretly leaned, having been exhausted by a lengthy war against Louis, King of France and now despairing of help from Edward, made peace against his wishes with Louis.'[257] Hastings' letters show that Edward had prevaricated in his support of Burgundy, now clearly regretted it, and 'fell into the greatest melancholy'.[258] To deflect his grief, Mancini reports that Edward organised all sorts of entertainments and, after going fishing, he caught a chill and died. Mancini must have obtained this information from someone who was close. His only named informant is Dr. John Argentine, a physician, and a member of Edward V's household, ideally placed

[256] A. J. Pollard. 'Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483'. *Nottingham Medieval Studies.* Vol. 38. Nottingham: (1994): 152-163.
[257] Mancini. 41.
[258] Mancini. 43.

to know if Edward was melancholic and had caught a chill. Pollard speculates that Argentine was the source for Mancini's assertion that 'In food and drink he (Edward) was most intemperate, it was his custom, as I have heard, to take an emetic for the gratification of gorging his stomach once more.'[259] No-one would be better placed to make this observation than a physician, and possibly the physician prescribing the emetic. In both the Calais letterbook and the 1463 letter, Hastings is at pains to point out that Edward is in good health (a proxy for 'being in control'). If Louis XI suspected otherwise, the doctor would have been the perfect informant. Pollard speculates that Argentine 'was an early English humanist who had visited Italy in the 1470s and may have been known to Angelo Cato',[260] thus Mancini may have sought him out.

Although Mancini does not know Hastings, he knows him by reputation as a loyal servant of Edward IV. However, he also introduces the idea that Hastings is immoral, perhaps reflecting street gossip:

> There were three other men of no small influence over the king.... Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York and Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Ely (John Morton), and the third was the king's chamberlain, by name Hastings (William , Baron Hastings). Insofar as they were mature in years and well versed in the practice of public affairs, these men more than any others were wont to further the designs of the regime and saw them carried out. Hastings, being the one who had endured all perils along with the king, was not only a promoter of his public measures but also an accomplice and participant in his private gratifications.[261]

[259] Mancini. 47.
[260] Pollard. 154.
[261] Mancini. 49.

As Lord Chamberlain, Hastings would have been in charge of the king's bedchamber and would know about the king's intimate activities. He is accused of participating in the king's 'private gratifications', but we do not know if this is as instigator, facilitator, or as one carrying out orders.

Mancini's sheds light on the events of 1482:

> From the queen's son, who we said was called the marquess, he (Hastings) was estranged and at mortal enmity on account of the mistresses they had abducted or seduced from each other. A capital charge had been threatened by each against the other by means of subverted informers. The upheaval of which we tell seems in no small part to have derived its origin in the quarrel of these two. And though by order of the king, who loved both of them, they had been made to reconcile two days before he died, yet, as the outcome later demonstrated, there always subsisted a latent hostility.[262]

Carson says 'Mancini understandably quotes the common gossip in London about vying over mistresses, but the suborning of informers to lay false charges is supported in the recorded evidence of one John Edward, who confessed to the King's Council at Westminster in 1482 that he had been put under extreme pressure by Hastings' council at Calais where he was threatened with 'putting him in the brake' if he did not falsely traduce the Marquess of Dorset, Earl Rivers and Robert Radclyf. These charges were serious enough for Rivers to have instructed his attorney to prepare several copies of John Edward's confession for circulation.'[263] There is no evidence for Hastings' imprisonment,

[262] Mancini. 49. This is potentially the incident which leads Shakespeare to show Richard greeting Hastings with the question 'How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?' in *Richard III:I:I*
[263] Mancini. 339.

but there is evidence of the dispute with Thomas, Marquis of Dorset,[264] and the bad blood between Hastings and the Woodvilles, which Edward attempted to resolve on his deathbed. Mancini is no eyewitness, but he is well informed and reflecting the 'word on the street'. It is a partisan view, disapproving of Hastings' activities and suggesting that Hastings was potentially in trouble.

Mancini now gives a description of Hastings's demise and execution. After Edward's death, he reports that Hastings wrote immediately to Richard, Duke of Gloucester:

> ...because he had a long-standing friendship with the duke, and moreover he loathed the entire family of the queen on account of the marquess. He was further reported to have urged the duke to make haste to the city with a strong force, and exact retribution for the wrong done to him by his enemies. Indeed, retribution would easily be obtained if, before he came to the city, he took the young King Edward under his care and into his hands: he could overmaster any who objected by catching them unawares.[265]

Mancini suggests that it is Hastings who comes up with the plot for the 'capture' of the young king Edward V. Carson notes that Mancini seems to have detailed knowledge of what was in Hastings' letters to Gloucester, suggesting inside information, although he may be retrofitting ideas based on the ensuing outcomes. Mancini reports that Hastings' motivation for urging Gloucester to act quickly is fear for himself, because 'he was alone in the city, nor was he without great danger, for he could scarcely evade the plots of those for whom his friendship with the duke compounded their long-standing hostility.'[266] So, as

[264] Hanham. *The Cely Letters*. 284.
[265] Mancini. 51.
[266] Mancini. 51.

Gloucester approaches from the north, Hastings is in fear of his life – from the Woodvilles. His sworn loyalty to Edward IV means that he wants to see his son on the throne, but this gives power to the Woodvilles and Hastings' position, liberty, and freedom, are threatened. On the other hand, if Gloucester is appointed Protector, Hastings thinks he will be safe. He is playing a dangerous game, since if Mancini reports the true contents of his letters, it could be construed as treason.

Mancini recounts the actions of Gloucester and the preparation for his coup:

> Having gathered together all the royal blood into his power, yet he considered his prospects insufficiently secure without removing or detaining those who had been the close friends of his brother and would be, he reckoned, faithful to the latter's offspring. In this category fell, by his reckoning, Hastings, the king's chamberlain; Thomas Rotherham, whom shortly before he had removed from office; and the Bishop of Ely. Hastings had been a loyal companion of Edward from the latter's early age and an active military man; while Thomas, although born of humble stock, had yet been raised to eminence .....Therefore, having ascertained their loyalties via the Duke of Buckingham, and perceiving that from time to time they met in each other's homes, he hastened into evildoing lest the resources and influence of these men should hinder him.[267]

Mancini stresses Hastings' loyalty, but also Gloucester's concern about his resources, influence and potential conspirators, meeting in each other's homes. As Captain of Calais,

[267] Mancini. 63.

Hastings was in charge of a considerable military force. If there was to be a fight, Gloucester had to be sure that the Calais garrison would be on his side. Ralph Hastings, William's brother, was in charge in Calais, until dismissed by a letter from Gloucester one week after Hastings' death.[268] Mancini narrates Gloucester's trap:

> When these three and several others had come to the Tower of London on a certain day at about the tenth hour to salute the Protector, according to their custom, and were admitted to the deepest interior of the building, the Protector by prearrangement called out that a trap had been set for him, and that these men had come with concealed weapons so that they could be the first to unleash a violent attack. At that, soldiers who had been stationed there by their lord came running in with the Duke of Buckingham and beheaded Hastings by the sword under the false name of treason, the others they detained, out of respect for their lives, it is supposed, for reasons of religion and holy orders.[269]

The account of Hastings' death is stark and swift. He is killed 'under the false name of treason', so Mancini is sympathetic. There is no embellishment to the story as there is in later accounts – no mention of dreams, warnings, or strawberries. Mancini is not basing his words on eyewitness accounts, but reflecting what was said 'on the streets'. He reflects upon Hastings' fate:

> Thus was Hastings killed, not by those enemies he had always feared but by a friend whom he had never doubted. But who will be spared by the mad lust to

[268] *King Richard the Third to Sir Ralph Hastings knt. Lieutenant of the Castle of Guisnes. British Library, MS. Harl 433, f. 239 printed in British Library Harleian Manuscript 433. 4: Index / by Rosemary Horrox. Upminster, Essex: Richard III Society, 1983.*
[269] Mancini. 65.

> rule, if it dares violate bonds of blood and friendship? After this bloodshed had come to pass inside the fortress the townsmen became fearful, learning of the commotion but uncertain of the cause, each one taking up arms. But then the duke at once quieted the people by sending a herald to proclaim that a trap had been detected in the fortress and the author of the plot, Hastings, had paid the penalty.

When Mancini asks, 'But who will be spared by the mad lust to rule, if it dares violate bonds of blood and friendship?' he is damning Gloucester as a traitor to his family, his friends, and all norms of moral behaviour. Gloucester now begins the propaganda effort, and a proclamation named Hastings as a traitor. Mancini considers Hastings' demise was a symbolic turning point. He reports:

> But after the removal of Hastings all the attendants who had served the young king were barred from access to him..... The physician Argentine, who was the last of the attendants employed by the young king, reported that, like a victim prepared for sacrifice, he sought remission of sins by daily confession and penitence, because he reckoned his death was imminent.'[270]

This passage evokes sympathy for the young prince, reflecting the sense of desperation that must have been felt by Argentine himself. It is the ultimate indictment of Gloucester – what noble man could condone or even contemplate the killing of a child? It is the end of chivalry and the victory of evil.

[270] Mancini. 65.

Dominico Mancini had access to eyewitnesses and such as Dr. John Argentine, but his first verbal reports were performances – designed to have a dramatic effect upon his audience rather than list the facts as the medieval chronicles would have done. The drama was sensational, and the French court must have concluded that the English king was morally reprehensible. Louis XI was reassured that England would not invade France, at least until Richard III's reign had stabilised, and this gives Louis the opportunity to consider the suit of Henry Tudor. After all, if Louis were to support Henry against Richard, he would have 'just cause' given the evil reputation of Richard III, the Usurper.

Pollard considered that Mancini played the role of the 'foreign correspondent'; 'Like journalists the world over, he relied on the accuracy of his informants, his 'usually reliable sources'... and like a journalist too, Mancini was 'filing a story'.'[271] He was using hearsay, not writing an academic history. Michael Hicks[272] argues that 'Mancini's account cannot be taken at face value. It too incorporates propaganda and the material that he so rigorously analysed was not everything he thought.'[273] Mancini repeats much of the Ricardian propaganda that the Woodvilles had stolen the king's treasure[274], but on the whole, it appears that much of the detail can be corroborated and some of the information, possibly from Argentine, gives us a greater insight into how rapidly the situation was evolving. We do not know if Mancini's account was available to later Tudor

[271] Pollard. 53.
[272] Michael Hicks, *Richard III: the Man behind the Myth*. (London, 1991).
[273] Hicks. 161.
[274] Mancini, 57

writers, although the owner of the Lille copy, Paulus Aemilius of Verona,[275] was known to Thomas More.[276] If so, it is the benchmark for the literary works which followed.

These two writers bridge the gap between the chronicles and early modern texts. Commynes remembers Hastings warmly as the noble man both in position and character, regarded by Louis XI as Edward's best servant. It echoes the qualities noted in Edward's own accolade when Hastings is raised to the peerage, two glowing accounts by people who knew him well. Mancini did not know him, but, like Commynes, uses his account to further his standing in the French court. Mancini acknowledges Hastings' good character, using this to contrast Richard's evil to create a sensational dramatic performance. Written down only five months after Hastings' execution, it is 'of the moment', reflecting the current gossip. Mancini is sympathetic to Hastings and uses him as a moral judgement on Gloucester. Hastings is killed 'not by those enemies he had always feared but by a friend whom he had never doubted.'[277] This irony, combined with the evidence for Hastings' good character, lays the foundations for later dramas by both More and Shakespeare.

[275] Mancini, 11
[276] Mancini. 33.
[277] Mancini. 65.

7: Shakespeare's Sources: The Tudor Commentators

By the sixteenth century, the political, social and cultural environment had moved on, and writers were, literally, in a new age. Events were seen from the perspective of the Tudors, with writers dramatising stories rather than producing pure chronicles. Tudor propaganda has been widely discussed, even called a 'myth' by later critics[278] who regard some writers as partisan, rewriting history for the glorification of Henry VII.[279] These texts weave the 'facts' of Hastings' life from the provenance of the chronicles and the late fifteenth century writers into the sources that influenced Shakespeare.

Sir Thomas More

Sir Thomas More is a pivotal writer, influencing almost all the later works. He wrote two versions of his 'History of King Richard III', one in English, one in Latin, not absolutely identical and both left unfinished, written when he was an undersheriff of London 'about the yeare of our Lorde 1513'.[280] Neither was published during his lifetime, although Sylvester claims manuscript copies were circulating in the 1530s.[281] The first known publication was by Richard Grafton[282] in 1543 and again in 1550 when included in Edward Hall's 'Chronicle'.[283] We do not know why More wrote about Richard III - perhaps to

[278] Notably, E. M. W. Tillyard. *Shakespeare's History Plays*. London: Penguin, 1944. 29., and Paul Murray Kendall, *Richard the Third*. London: BCA, 2002. 419: 'At the heart of the drama stands the Tudor myth, or tradition, a collection of alleged facts and attitudes and beliefs concerning the course of history in the fifteenth century, which was first propagated in the reign of Henry VIII and given its final expression in the three plays of *Henry VI* and the *Richard III* of William Shakespeare.'
[279] E.g. Paul Murray Kendall. *Richard III: The Great Debate: Sir Thomas More's History of King Richard III and Horace Walpole's Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III*. United Kingdom: Folio Society, 1965.
[280] More. xi
[281] More. xi.
[282] Hardynge, John and Richard Grafton ed. *The Chronicle of John Hardynge*. London: Grafton: 1543.
[283] Hall. *Hall's Chronicle*.

record verbal accounts he had heard, as a warning against tyranny or as a personal exercise in dramatic literary fiction.

In his early years More had served John Morton,[284] who was in the room at the Tower when Hastings was executed on 13th June 1483.[285] Morton was a survivor, serving Henry VI, then transferring allegiance to Edward IV before switching back to support Henry Tudor. In 1483, Morton was arrested and held at Brecknock[286] Castle by the Duke of Buckingham. After Buckingham's rebellion he escaped to France. He left no known memoire, but when More was in his service it is plausible that he had heard Morton give his account, although he does not cite Morton as his source. Morton is reported to have remarked upon More: 'This child here waiting at table. Whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.'[287] Seward[288] suggests that the detail of Gloucester asking for a 'mess of strawberries' can only have come from Morton,[289] and the *History* ends with Morton's detailed discourse with Buckingham before the rebellion. Morton knew Hastings well, worked and served alongside him, was named in his will and witnessed his demise, so any information from him would have been invaluable in forming Hastings' character. Richard Marius,[290] cites evidence for another corroborating witness:

[284] Bishop of Ely, then Archbishop of Canterbury.
[285] Nichols. *Testamenta Vetusta*.
[286] Brecon
[287] Richard Marius. *Thomas More*. London: Weidenfeld, 1993. 22.
[288] Seward. 265.
[289] It has been suggested that Morton was the real author of the History of Richard III. Noted by Sylvester in More: *Richard III.* footnote to xiii.
[290] Marius. 22.

Morton's swift messenger was Christopher Urswick, a young priest who loved to ride and hunt, then an agent acting for Margaret Beaufort. Urswick later became a friend to Thomas More, and he must have been one of the sources for More's *Richard III*.[291] Pollard[292] also considers More's sources to have been mostly verbal, suggesting More's father (who had served in Edward's household), friends of Erasmus, Bishop Fox and even Sir Thomas Howard as potential informants.

More provides much of the source material (via Grafton, Hall and Holinshed) for the plot of Shakespeare's Richard III, but some of the stylistic aspects of the work are incompatible. More includes particularly long speeches, almost in the style of sermons, which are unsuitable for inclusion in Shakespeare's stage play, suggesting that More did not see his work as a performance piece as Mancini's had been. When King Edward is dying, he calls together his friends and relations in a scene mirrored in Shakespeare. However, More turns this into a lengthy homily lasting three pages on the evils of dissention and preaching that 'a pestilent serpent is ambition.'[293] There is an equally lengthy discussion on the legality of sanctuary,'[294] and the work appears to be one of deep philosophical discussion rather than a dramatic piece suitable for the stage. This is in contrast to the action when More relates the events leading up to Hastings' execution, when more vibrant dialogue brings the actors to life. The memorable soliloquys in Shakespeare, when Richard divulges his secrets to the audience, are missing in More, but

[291] Marius. 22.
[292] Pollard A. F. 'The Making of Sir Thomas More's Richard III'. In *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More*, edited by R. S. Sylvester and G. P. Marc'hadour, Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1977. 421-31 Pollard notes that the Crowland Chronicle was not published until 1524. If More had it to hand, he would surely have included Hastings' remark that the transfer of government had been 'accomplished without any killing and with only so much bloodshed in the affair as might have come from a cut finger'. Crowland. 159.
[293] More. 13.
[294] More. 31.

in between the long speeches and sermons the fast-paced dramatic action, dialogue and characterisation of Hastings occurs, and it is around this central episode that the piece comes to life, realises its dramatic potential and delivers the material which Shakespeare evolved into his play.

More begins as if writing a chronicle or history, with a precise note that Edward 'lived fifty and three years, seven months, and six days, and thereof reigned two and twenty years, one month, and eight days.'[295] In an attempt to be precise, he is inaccurate, as Edward was, in fact, forty-three. He gives a lengthy account of Edward 'of visage lovely, of body mighty, strong, and clean made.'[296] This is in sharp contrast to his opening account of Richard, who is 'little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favoured of visage.'[297] The characterisation of Hastings begins when he is called to the king's deathbed, revealing the antagonism between Hastings and the Woodvilles:

> he called some of them before him that were at variance, and in especial the Lord Marquis of Dorset,[298] the Queen's sone by her first husband, and Richard, the Lord Hastings, a noble man, then Lord Chamberlain, against whom the Queen specially grudged for the great favour the King bore him, and also that she thought him secretly familiar with the King in wanton company. Her kindred also bore him sore, as well for that the King had made him Captain of Calais (which office the Lord

[295] More. 3.
[296] More. 5.
[297] More. 8.
[298] More refers to the animosity noted in Hanham. 284.

> Rivers, brother to the Queen, claimed of the King's former promise), as for divers other great gifts which he received that they looked for.[299]

More makes the mistake of calling Hastings 'Richard', another inaccuracy. Born in 1478, he was just five when Hastings died and did not know him personally; the mistakes are probably due to the text being unfinished and not having had a pre-publication proofread! Hastings is referred to as 'a noble man',[300] entirely consistent with the characterisations in Mancini and Commynes. The Queen is said to begrudge Hastings because of 'the great favour the King bore him'.[301] More confirms the enmity later when she declares 'Ah woe worth him,' quod she,' for he is one of them that labours to destroy me and my blood.[302] By 1483, Hastings had served Edward IV for well over 20 years as his trusted advisor, confidante, public servant, diplomat and military leader, so his 'great favour' was perhaps unsurprising.

More says the Queen 'thought him secretly familiar with the King in wanton company'.[303] Hastings, as Lord Chamberlain, controlled access to the King's apartments and would therefore have witnessed, or even participated in, Edward's indiscretions, and kept his secrets. Hastings is described 'of living somewhat dissolute',[304] but his reputation for loose living might have been embellished into propaganda by his enemies. Hastings has no known illegitimate children and his sheltering of Mistress Shore following Edward's death

[299] More. 11.
[300] More. 11.
[301] More. 11.
[302] More. 22.
[303] More. 11.
[304] More. 53.

could be interpreted as an act of protection for his former friend's lover of over 10 years. As Henry Tudor was set to marry Elizabeth of York, Edward's daughter, it was politically expedient to heap the moral criticism and relationship with Jane Shore onto Hastings rather than her father.

More refers to Hastings as Captain of Calais, a position that had been promised to Anthony Woodville,[305] causing bad blood between them. By 1483, this was old news. Hastings was appointed to Calais in 1471, following the death of Warwick. Woodville had been promised the appointment but had 'surprisingly declared he would 'to be at a day upon the Saracens'.[306] Rivers wanted to go on a crusade.[307] Wilkins[308] notes that 'the King was furious', and 'he refused Anthony permission to go'. John Paston writes, 'The King is not best pleased with him... the King has said... whenever he has most to do then Lord Scales[309] will soon ask leave to depart ... it is most because of cowardice'.[310] Hastings was appointed as Edward needed someone loyal, dependable and who would be popular with the Calais Garrison, as Warwick had been.

The Woodville animosity bubbled up again from time to time: in 1482 with Dorset, and with the Queen, with whom he had contracted in April 1464.[311] Hastings' close bond with Edward had potentially led to her becoming queen, although she may have resented the contract. If this was the cause of lasting animosity, Hastings must have feared for his life if

[305] Elizabeth Woodville's brother, Lord Rivers / Scales
[306] Christopher Wilkins, *The Last Knight Errant: Sir Edward Woodville and the age of Chivalry*. London: Taurus, 2010. 47.
[307] Anthony Woodville had a reputation as a learned and chivalric knight.
[308] Wilkins. 47. Quoting John Paston letter to Margaret Paston 5th July 1471.
[309] Anthony Woodville, also known as Lord Rivers
[310] Wilkins. 47-48.
[311] See Chapter 4.

the Woodvilles seized power. Hastings supported Gloucester because it was in his own interests and when Gloucester became Protector, Hastings kept all the offices he had before and is re-appointed as Master of the Mint.[312] Gloucester trusted him as a competent administrator, but equally drew him into his faction and made him feel secure. Through the stated animosity, More builds a dramatic tension which must be resolved, creating the backdrop for Hastings' betrayal and downfall. This comes to a head when Gloucester and Buckingham manoeuvre the nobles into two separate councils:

> Lord Stanley, that was after Earl of Derby, wisely mistrusted it and said to the Lord Hastings that he much disliked these two several councils. 'For while we', quod he, 'talk of one matter in the one place, little wot we whereof they talk in the other place.' 'My Lord,' quod the Lord Hastings, 'on my life, never doubt you. For while one man is there which is never thence, never can there be thing once minded, that should sound amiss toward me, but it should be in mine ears before it were well out of their mouths.' This meant he by Catesby, which was of his near secret counsel and whom he very familiarly used, and in his most weighty matters put no man in so special trust, reckoning himself to no man so lief, since he well wist there was no man to him so much beholden as was this Catesby, which was a man well learned in the laws of this land, and by the special favour of the Lord Chamberlain, in good authority, and much rule bore in all the county of Leicester where the Lord Chamberlain's power chiefly lay.'[313]

Hastings trusts Gloucester so does not suspect that they have been split into groups to 'divide and rule'. Clearly, Stanley is already suspicious and tries to warn him. Hastings also

[312] *CPR, Edward V, May 20, 1483, 348*
[313] More. 45-46.

trusts William Catesby, who had been part of Hastings' Leicestershire household. Hastings is blind, with a false sense of security, because he believes Catesby has his best interests at heart. Catesby 'was no man to him so much beholden', and Hastings is trusting in the values of the past and the solidarity of the affinity[314] upon which he had built his power base. In 1483, a seismic shift is about to occur, and these 'old' values will be overturned. More reiterates the esteem in which Hastings is held: 'And undoubtedly the Protector loved him well and loath was to have lost him, saving for fear lest his life should have quailed their purpose.'[315] Gloucester feared Hastings because of his position, influence, affinity and command of the Calais garrison. They had a common bond as Hastings had accompanied Gloucester and Edward IV into exile in Burgundy, and in the ensuing battles he had invariably led one flank whilst Gloucester led the other. Although successful, Gloucester would remember Hastings' rout at Barnet, but not his earlier triumphs with Edward.[316] Likewise, More does not refer to Hastings' military prowess in the 1460s - this part of his history is forgotten. Gloucester does not approach Hastings in person to tell him he is going to usurp the throne, perhaps because he cannot face Hastings who had a strong sense of the old chivalric values that Gloucester now challenges. Gloucester's motto was 'Loyaltie me lie' (loyalty binds me), ironically the attribute More uses to describe the House of York's most faithful and loyal servant – William Hastings.

Gloucester sends Catesby to sound out Hastings, but he is not impartial as he hopes to gain from Hastings' demise and was later awarded many of Hastings' lands and appointments. Catesby returns and 'reported to them that he found him so fast and

[314] For exploration of Hastings' affinity see Rowney, Dunham and Westervelt
[315] More. 46.
[316] Gloucester was only 8 years old in 1460.

heard him speak so terrible words that he dared no further break.'[317] More speculates that this did not take transpire as Catesby reports. If it had, it is unlikely that Hastings would have turned up at the Tower on 13th June in such a confident mood, nor spoken as reported by both Mancini and More. More was suspicious of Catesby's motives, who 'procured the Protector hastily to rid him. ..... for that he trusted by his death to obtain much of the rule that the Lord Hastings bore in his country.'[318] In these passages More considers the psychology of the characters in a way that was hardly ever seen in the chronicles. Gloucester might have found it difficult to kill his former comrade in arms and Catesby's account is treated with suspicion. Hastings acts because he fears the power of the Woodvilles, and this blinds him to others' motivations. Hastings' fate is sealed by Catesby and the Tower plot is hatched. For Catesby's purposes, this must be swift, before Gloucester has a chance to hear Hastings' own account of the meeting. Hastings is confident in his relationship with Gloucester,[319] and surely, if had he been told of Gloucester's ambition, he might have arranged a private face-to-face audience. This supports More's conjecture that Catesby was the instigator of the plot.

The fateful meeting begins with Gloucester asking Morton for a 'mess' of strawberries, a detail which appears in More for the first time and is later used by Shakespeare. It is an odd request, designed to set a relaxed and jovial tone. Gloucester is potentially checking who is in the room and that there were no impediments to his plot. He then leaves the meeting for about an hour. If Hastings had been plotting, why did he not act at this point?

[317] More. 46.
[318] More. 46.
[319] 'And of truth the Protector and the Duke of Buckingham made very good semblance to the Lord Hastings, and kept him much in company.' More. 44.

This suggests that there was no treasonous intent. More's description of Gloucester on his return as 'all changed with a wonderful sour, angry countenance, knitting his brows, frowning and frothing and gnawing on his lips'[320] includes details that only an eyewitness or accomplished dramatist could include, such as the biting of his lips.

He begins to entrap Hastings:

> 'What were they worthy to have that compass and imagine the destruction of me, being so near the blood to the King and Protector of his royal person and his realm?' At this question, all the lords sat sore astonished, musing much by whom this question should be meant, of which every man wist himself clear. Then the Lord Chamberlain, as he that for the love between them thought he might be boldest with him, answered and said that they were worthy to be punished as heinous traitors, whatsoever they were.[321]

Everyone is surprised by the accusations. All stay silent but Hastings speaks. More offers an explanation; Hastings is 'grudged' because he realises he is not in on the plot.[322] Hastings detects that something has changed in his relationship with Gloucester and is scrabbling to get it back on course by supporting Gloucester's theme, little realising that he is digging a hole for himself. It is easy to overlook this snippet of characterisation because of the speed of the action, but More is empathic - he has imagined himself in Hastings' shoes and tried to understand his emotions such as his indignation at being excluded. By characterising Hastings in this way, More is able to show how Gloucester

[320] More. 48.
[321] More. 48.
[322] More. 48.

reels him in. Hastings is on the back foot, and Gloucester is aiming the next blow at an already wounded animal;

> Then said the Protector, 'You shall see in what wise that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore's wife, with their affinity have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body.' And therewith he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, where he showed a werish, withered arm – and small, as it was never other. And thereupon every man's mind sore misgave them, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrel, for well they wist the Queen was too wise to go about any such folly. And also, if she would, yet would she of all folk least make Shore's wife of counsel, whom of all women she most hated as that concubine whom the King, her husband, had most loved. And also no man was there present but well knew that his arm was ever such since his birth. Nevertheless the Lord Chamberlain – which from the death of King Edward kept Shore's wife, on whom he somewhat doted in the King's life, saving as it is said he that while forbore her of reverence towards his King, or else of a certain kind of fidelity to his friend – answered and said, 'Certainly My Lord, if they have so heinously done, they be worthy heinous punishment.'[323]

Gloucester's first step has been to accuse the queen, Hastings' adversary. Hastings agrees with him, but is 'grudged', defensive and vulnerable. Next, Gloucester accuses Shore's wife, making a direct link to Hastings, as everyone knows they are together. At this point, everyone in the room must have realised Gloucester's designs. More imagines their

[323] More. 49.

thoughts with three key statements: the queen is too wise to use witchcraft, she is no friend to Jane Shore and Gloucester has been disfigured since birth. After the recent discovery of Richard's skeleton, Leicester University concluded 'there is no sign of a withered arm,'[324] casting doubt More's account, but it may be that the details of Gloucester's scoliosis were not generally known at the time. More must have been aware of some physical deficiency, even by rumour, as he links it to the medieval mind's perception of deformity and evil, to enrich his description of Gloucester as a monster.

There was utter confusion in the room. Hastings tries to intervene and restore calm, saying there should be an enquiry. He wants due process, evidence and, if necessary, a trial. It would give him a chance to defend himself. But at this pivot point due process and reality diverge: 'What,' quod the Protector; 'you serve me I ween with 'ifs' and with 'ands', I tell you they have done so, and that I will make good on your body, traitor'.[325] Men are summoned from outside and Gloucester declares:

> I arrest you, traitor.' 'What me, My Lord?' quod he. 'Yea, the traitor,' quod the Protector....'For by St. Paul,' quod he, 'I will not to dinner till I see your head off.'[326]

Hastings is executed without trial, begging the question of due process:

> It booted him not to ask why, but heavily he took a priest at adventure and made a short shrift, for a longer would not be suffered; ... So he was brought forth into the green beside the chapel within the Tower, and his head laid down upon a long log of timber and there stricken off.[327]

[324] https://le.ac.uk/richard-iii/identification/osteology/what-bones-cant-tell-us
[325] More. 49.
[326] More. 49.
[327] More. 50.

Hastings knows he is utterly defeated, illustrated by More's statement that 'it booted him not to ask why'.[328] More empathises – somewhat prescient of his own future demise. The mention of Hastings' burial[329] at Windsor suggests that Gloucester does not really believe he is a traitor, as he allows the burial to go ahead.

More now uses the literary device of disregarded warnings reminiscent of 'the cock crowed three times',[330] to presage the fall of the tragic hero:

> For the self night next before his death, the Lord Stanley sent a trusty secret messenger to him at midnight in all the haste, requiring him to rise and ride away with him, for he was disposed utterly no longer to bide; he has so fearful a dream in which him thought that a boar with his tusks so raced them both by the heads that the blood ran about both their shoulders.

The white boar is Gloucester's badge. Hastings, however, dismisses the fear:

> Tell him it is plain witchcraft to believe in such dreams; .... we might be as likely to make them true by our going, if we were caught and brought back ... And if we should needs cost fall in peril one way or other, yet had I lever that men should see it were by other men's falsehood than think it were either of our own fault or faint heart.[331]

Hastings maintains that to flee would signal their treachery or cowardice, and he would rather die with his honour intact. He asserts that he is as sure of Gloucester 'as I am of my

[328] More. 49.
[329] 'afterward his body with the head entered at Windsor beside the body of king Edward.' More. 50.
[330] The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter... "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." *John 18:15–17,25–27.*
[331] More. 50.

own hand'.[332] His journey is also prophetic: 'the same morning in which he was beheaded, his horse twice or thrice stumbled with him almost to falling,'[333] which More says is 'of an old rite and custom observed as a token oftentimes, notably foregoing some great misfortune.'[334] This is reinforced when a knight arrives to accompany him to the Tower:

> This knight, when it happed the Lord Chamberlain by the way to stay his horse and commune a while with a priest whom he met in the Tower Street, broke his tale and said merrily to him: 'What, My Lord, I pray you come on – whereto talk you so long with that priest? You have no need of a priest yet:' and therewith he laughed upon him, as though he would say, 'you shall have soon.'[335]

Again, Hastings does not pick up the signals. Finally, he meets with 'a poursuivant of his own name', who refers back to 1482, when Hastings had 'far fallen into the King's indignation and stood in great fear of himself.'[336] Hastings reassures him ironically: 'lo how the world is turned; now stand mine enemies in that danger .... and I never in my life so merry, nor never in so great surety.'[337] This passage allows More to give Hastings his 'famous last words' because he had said nothing in the Tower when he was dumbstruck, defeated and led to his fate. More sums up his character and legacy reputation, to be inherited by Shakespeare:

> O good God, the blindness of our mortal nature! When he most feared, he was in good surety; when he reckoned himself sure, he lost his life – and that within two

[332] More. 50.
[333] More. 50.
[334] More. 50.
[335] More. 51.
[336] More. 52. Discussed in Ives E. W. 'Andrew Dymmock and the Papers of Antony, Earl Rivers, 1482-3.' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* 41 (1968): 216–29.
[337] More. 52.

> hours after. Thus ended this honourable man: a good knight and a gentle, of great authority with his Prince, of living somewhat dissolute, plain and open to his enemy, and secret to his friend: easy to beguile,[338] as he that of good heart and courage forestudied no perils; a loving man and passing well beloved; very faithful and trusty enough, trusting too much.[339]

Hastings may be blind to the warnings, but More portrays him as an honourable man, with faults, but well-loved and loyal. More admires him, his noble values and 'gentle', a parallel to his own public service, akin to both Commynes and Hastings' positions as advisors to kings. Remembering that More's father served Edward IV,[340] he is revealed not as 'anti-Yorkist', but 'anti-Gloucester'. This is a subtlety to the view that More was part of a Tudor propaganda machine. He shows the evil nature of Gloucester, but he has empathy for the characters who suffered on Richard's way to the throne. If Richard could execute such a noble man without trial, More is, by implication, questioning Richard's ability to rule justly. The irony is that one whose motto is 'Loyalty binds me' destroys the most loyal supporter of the House of York. The sentiment is that Hastings represents the old chivalric values, but that the age has turned with his death. The age of chivalry did not die with Edward, but with Hastings.

[338] This is somewhat contrary to the evidence shown in the diplomatic letters or his refusal to give Louis XI a receipt for the pension.
[339] More. 53.
[340] Marius. 6. In 1530, John More 'left a bequest to have masses sung for Edward's soul'.

Shore's wife and *The Mirror for Magistrates*

In the late sixteenth century, a collection of poetry was popular which would almost certainly have been known to Shakespeare. *A Mirror for Magistrates*[341] was modelled on Boccacio's *De Casibus Vivorum Illustrium*[342] and John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*[343]. First published in 1559, a number of characters who also appear in *Richard III* were added in 1563, including a poem on William Hastings written by John Dolman.[344] Others included Anthony Woodville, the Duke of Buckingham, Richard III himself and 'Shore's Wife'. Lucas, reviewing Tragedy 21, notes the differing critical views of the critics; Lord Hastings 'has proven itself to be the most aesthetically controversial poem.... Lily B. Campbell calls it perhaps the worst piece of poetry in the Mirror, while John Thompson praises it as among the best'.[345] *The Mirror* reflects the reputations of the characters passed down in literature and urban myth, and it was widely read, remaining in print for almost 60 years.[346] Its popularity brought with it the popularisation of the characters, known not for a broad perspective on their entire lives gleaned from the facts, but by the character flaws that lead to their downfall. Hastings falls into this camp due to his association with Mistress Shore, and the sin of adultery.

Jane Shore, real name Elizabeth Lambert, is inextricably linked with Hastings in the events of 1483. She was called 'Shore's wife' until named 'Jane' by Thomas Heywood[347] in 1599,

[341] Scott Lucas, ed. *A Mirror for Magistrates: A Modernized and Annotated Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.
[342] Giovanni Boccaccio. Hall, L. H. ed. *de Casibus Vivorum Illustrium.* Florida: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1962.
[343] John Lydgate. Dr. H. Bergen ed. *Fall of Princes.* Washington: Early English Text Society, 1925.
[344] Lucas. 159.
[345] Lucas. xxxi.
[346] Lucas. xv.
[347] Thomas Heywood. Richard Rowland ed. *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV.* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005.

so it is unclear if she was ever called Jane in her lifetime. Implicated in Hastings' treason, Richard III imprisoned her in Ludgate. Fabyan records that, after Hastings' death:

> was a woman namyd Shoore that before days, afftyr the common ffame, the lord Chambyrlayn held, contrary hys honour, callid to a Reconnyng ffor part of hys goodys & othyr thyngys, In soo much that alle hyr movablys were attchid by þ' Shyrevys of London, and she lastly as a common harlott put to opyn penaunce, ffor the lyfe that she ledd w' þ said lord hastyngys & othir grete astatys.[348]

The penance is consistent with More's depiction. The passage implicates Hastings in adultery, and 'othir grete astatys' probably refers to Edward IV. Written after Richard III took the throne, the author would have been influenced by the propaganda prevalent at the time rather than first-hand knowledge. A further reference comes in October 1483:

> denouncing Thomas Dorset, late marquess of Dorset, who holds the unshameful and mischievous woman called Shore's wife in adultery.[349]

Shore, Edwards's favourite mistress for ten years, was rumoured to be living with Hastings. She is then associated with Dorset even though he had escaped to France by October 1483. In More's history, Gloucester accuses her of being in league with Elizabeth Woodville and using witchcraft.[350] Given Gloucester's ruthless actions, it is odd that Shore is not accused of treason and is 'let off' comparatively lightly with the penance. This suggests that there was no evidence for the accusations of treason against her or Hastings. When Thomas Lynom, the king's solicitor, wished to marry her, Gloucester

[348] Fabyan. 233.
[349] *CPR, 1476-85. 371.*
[350] More. 48.

considered him 'merveillously blynded and abused',[351] but he did not prevent the marriage. From More onwards the character of 'Jane' Shore takes on a life of its own, and the implications for the reputation of Hastings are that he is remembered as an adulterer rather than as the chivalric, accomplished and noble persona of his earlier days.

The Mirror can be viewed as a degradation of the truth in steady decline from Commynes, who knew Hastings and was present at many of the events, through Mancini, who includes hearsay, to the drama of Thomas More. As the years progress, the literature moves further from the facts and the popular images represented by *The Mirror* speak to a wider audience because they tell popular themes to which the general public can relate. Shakespeare can now pick and choose from this legacy. He is presenting a history, but one that must appeal to the general public in the theatre. He must also link that public with the tales of the past, but draw them into the story. He is, in part, able to do this by referencing the characters appearing in *The Mirror* and who need little introduction.

[351] James Gairdner. *History of the Life and Reign of Richard III*. Bath: Cedric Chivers Ltd.1972. 189.

8: Hastings and Shakespeare

Shakespeare concludes his history cycle with *Richard III*, written in 1597, and it is from this play that Hastings gains his reputation today.[352] The events are over a century old, and without personal knowledge Shakespeare relies on More, Hall and Holinshed, with some evidence for Fabyan, for his sources.[353] He could have penned Hastings as a rich and rounded character, referencing the military hero, competent public servant, and international diplomat respected by the rulers of Europe, akin to the portrayal by Commynes, who knew him. However, he does not. In some productions, Hastings is played as a bumbling, naive official, whilst he has even been described as 'a foolish man.'[354] In Shakespeare, he is two-dimensional – loyal and 'too-trusting'.[355] There is nothing of the intelligent courtier proficient in the strategies of international intrigue because this complexity would deflect from Shakespeare's intent - to portray evil in the person of Gloucester, who manipulates his victims and sees off the opposition. Hastings is this opposition – as Heller says, 'the case that stands for all other cases.'[356]

Hastings has another purpose, another reason why he is so central to the play. This purpose is structural. Shakespeare creates dramatic tension in *Richard III* through a number of structural devices which produce a circular motion of retribution, revenge, and 'payback' when crimes will inevitably be resolved. These devices consist of a series of

[352] William Shakespeare. *Richard III.* A. Hammond. ed. *King Richard III*. The Arden Edition. London: Methuen, 1981.
[353] Fabyan. 197.
[354] Warren. 69.
[355] Paraphrasing More. 53.
[356] Agnes Heller. *The Time Is out of Joint: Shakespeare as Philosopher of History*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 264.

motifs occurring at regular intervals and which are referenced, mirrored, or repeated in the later scenes of the play. Harking back to the old Morality plays, where good triumphs over evil, they include dream sequences, prophecies, curses, and warnings. They echo the 'wheel of fortune',[357] where the characters rise, then fall, because of a character flaw.

Although Hastings is executed in Act 3 Scene 4, his importance in these structural devices continues throughout the play and his execution serves as the key pivot point in Richard's emergence as a tyrant. As Heller[358] has noted,

> In act 3, Shakespeare clearly draws the line between Gloucester, the evil comedian striving for tyranny, and Richard, who has already set the mechanism of tyranny into motion. Until the beginning of the act, Richard has initiated and ordered murders while pretending to be innocent. From act 3.1 [...] he murders mostly in the open [...] while pretending that those he ordered to be executed were guilty as accused. The execution of Lord Hastings is the case that stands for all other cases.[359]

This is the pivot point where not only the audience (who are in on the secret), but other participants – the mayor, Stanley, and the Bishop see Gloucester for what he really is; blatantly intent on the throne. Whether through shock, fear, or self-interest, they do not stand in his way, as Hastings himself bemoans 'For I, too fond, might have prevented this.'[360] The modern audience recognises the pattern, echoing the rise of Hitler or more contemporary dictators, as Heller suggests.[361]

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[357] As portrayed in Lydgate, *Fall of Princes,* and the *Mirror for Magistrates* (see bibliography)
[358] Heller. 261.
[359] Heller. 261.
[360] *Richard III.* 3.4.81.
[361] Heller. 261.

Shakespeare's 'flashbacks' of chronological inaccuracy

To set the context, Shakespeare refers to events which are out of sequence, but which build characters' flaws to the point where they receive 'justifiable' payback. This explains some of the chronological inaccuracies in the play. The main action takes place in 1483-85, but the death of Clarence took place five years earlier in 1478 and Richard's wooing of Anne is depicted shortly after the battle of Tewkesbury which was actually in 1471. Shakespeare includes this scene to show her manipulation by Gloucester, hoodwinked into marriage. The audience scorns her gullibility as Richard mocks her in an aside.[362] He questions her loyalty 'Hath she forgot already that brave prince, Edward, her lord, whom I some three months since, Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewkesbury?'[363] Anne's lack of loyalty is her character flaw. We know it will end badly and so does Gloucester; 'I will not keep her long'.[364] Although Anne returns only as a ghost, we see her actions mirrored by Queen Elizabeth when Richard approaches her for the hand of her daughter Elizabeth of York. This device proffers the shallowness of women, and it engenders a lack of sympathy for both Anne and later Elizabeth. We might consider this unfair because we understand that arranged marriages were purely political, but Anne is safeguarding her own future just as Queen Elizabeth seeks to safeguard the future of her eldest daughter, once the princes are gone. Whether this justifies their fate is open to question – a question answered by the emotions of the audience who by this time have been brought into Gloucester's plot through his asides.

[362] 'Was ever woman in this humour woo'd? Was ever woman in this humour won?' *Richard III,* I.2.232-3.
[363] *Richard III.* I:2.244-6.
[364] *Richard III.* I:2.234.

For the most part, *Richard III* is set in 1483 – 1485, the accession / usurpation up until his death at the battle of Bosworth. Shakespeare establishes his structural devices via anachronisms in the first few scenes. Today, if Shakespeare had been a film director, he may well have set these scenes as flashbacks and it would therefore have been quite legitimate to include, for example, the aftermath of the Battle of Tewkesbury. These flashback scenes serve as reminders for the audience about major historical events which they will know about, but which are no longer in living memory.

The Death of Clarence

The first scene deals with Clarence's commitment to the Tower of London, accused of having a name beginning with 'G' (George),[365] the first prophecy of the play. The prophecy comes true because the princes are despatched by Gloucester, another 'G', a detail neglected by Edward IV but immediately understood by the audience. Edward never questioned his youngest brother's loyalty, whereas he had many reasons to question Clarence who had rebelled with Warwick leading to Edward's exile in 1471. He married Isabella, Warwick's daughter, against Edward's wishes. In Clarence's murder scene, he dreams that he fled to Burgundy with Gloucester and Edward, showing regret for his rebellion. He is visited in his dream by Warwick: 'What scourge for perjury / Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'[366] and then by Prince Edward 'a shadow like an angel' who accuses him directly 'Clarence is come; false, fleeting, perjur'd Clarence, That stabb'd me in the field by Tewkesbury!'[367] After these accusations, Clarence freely admits his guilt

[365] Source: Lucas, ed. *Mirror for Magistrates*. 125
[366] *Richard III*. I: 4. 50-51.
[367] *Richard III.* I.4. 55-56

'I have done these things'.[368] and he is established as a 'false' character for whom payback and retribution has arrived. Gloucester blames Clarence's imprisonment on Queen Elizabeth,[369] consistent with Hall:

> there fel a sparkle of privy malice, betwene the kyng & his brother the duke of Clarence whether it rose out of olde grudges before tyme passed, or it were newly kyndled and set a fyre by the Quene or her bloud which were ever mistrustyng and prively barkynge at the kynges legnage, or were he desirous to reigne after hys brother...[370]

Without accusing Gloucester or the Woodvilles directly, Hall does go on the say that Edward regretted his brother's death and would have stopped it 'by the meanes of some of the nobilitie, he was circumvented and brought to hys confusion'.[371]

In this same scene, Gloucester greets Hastings who has just been released from the Tower, alleging that his imprisonment was also due to the Queen's faction, specifically Anthony Woodville. Having explored the records of prisoners in the Tower[372], there appears to be no historical evidence of Hasting's imprisonment at this date, but there is antagonism noted in the Cely letters.[373] Again, we have a 'flash-back' to a previous date. But the details of this incident do not serve Shakespeare's dramatic intent, so why does he include it?

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[368] *Richard III.* I.4. 66.
[369] *Richard III*. 1.4. 64.
[370] *Richard III*. Appendix III. 341.
[371] *Richard III*. Appendix III. 342.
[372] Harrison, B. A. *The Tower of London Prisoner Book : A Complete Chronology of the Persons Known to Have Been Detained at Their Majesties' Pleasure, 1100-1941.* Great Britain (Leeds): Royal Armouries, 2004.
[373] Hanham. *The Cely Letters.* 283-4.

Firstly, Hastings has made only a brief appearance in *Henry VI, Part III*,[374] almost an afterthought. Shakespeare needs to build his character in short order, even if two-dimensional, because Hastings is due to be executed by the middle of the play, so he has to be introduced early in the action. There is no time for lengthy characterisation, potentially why he leaves out many of his important accomplishments. Hastings is presented as someone that Edward cares about on his deathbed, wishing to heal the rift with the Woodvilles. He is presented as Gloucester's friend, although we know that Gloucester wants no friends: 'I am myself alone'.[375] Hastings is the most loyal courtier, loyal to Edward's memory and to the succession of Edward V. Ironically, it is Gloucester's motto 'Loyalty Binds Me' that sums up his character - directly at odds with Gloucester, who has no loyalty except to himself. Like everyone else, Hastings is too trusting of Gloucester until it is too late.

Secondly, his imprisonment due to Queen Elizabeth lays another accusation at her door. It echoes Gloucester's claim that she engineered the imprisonment of Clarence – our sympathy is with Hastings, as with Clarence. The scene sets up the antagonism between the Queen's faction and Hastings. Queen Elizabeth and her brother Anthony Woodville are now seen as fair game for 'payback' and retribution.

In these early scenes, the structural devices are established; the first prophecy is outlined ('G'), and the characteristics which show how each person who later suffers 'payback' is set up with an outline of their crimes. The effect is that no-one who is later persecuted by

[374] *Henry VI Part III.* 4.1. 38.
[375] *Henry VI Part III*. 5.6. 83.

Gloucester is seen as blameless, and as Shakespeare begins to build Gloucester's rapport with the audience through his asides, (another structural device), we are drawn into a plot where we know Gloucester will commit heinous acts. We can see his evil but can only admire the skill with which he intrigues until his own, perfectly circular, resolution and 'payback' takes place.

Structural device: Dreams

There are three important dream sequences in the play: Clarence's dream, Stanley's dream and Richard's dream on the eve of Bosworth. They are evenly spaced at measured intervals and structure the opening (Clarence), the pivot point (Stanley to Hastings) and the finale (Richard). Clarence's dreams of Warwick and Prince Edward establish that he is far from innocent. Clarence also dreams that he is escaping to Burgundy with his brother Gloucester, who calls him up on deck and 'As we pac'd along / Upon the giddy footing of the hatches, / Methought that Gloucester stumbled, and in falling, / Struck me (that thought to stay him) overboard, / Into the tumbling billows of the main.[376] Not only does Clarence miss the warning, but he is actually trying to save Gloucester! He still does not believe it when the second murderer exclaims 'You are deceiv'd: your brother Gloucester hates you.'[377] Clarence's dream is not included in any of the usual sources, so why does Shakespeare include it? This first dream sequence establishes the pattern - giving a warning which is not only unheeded but utterly disbelieved. It shows that Clarence is blind – a blindness common to all the actors on stage whilst being absolutely transparent to the audience through Gloucester's soliloquys.

[376] *Richard III*. 1.4. 16-20.
[377] *Richard III.* 1.4. 221.

In Act 3:2, a messenger arrives from Lord Stanley warning Hastings that, in a dream 'the boar had razed off his helm'.[378] The white boar is the badge of Gloucester. The dream belongs to Stanley, rather than to Hastings himself, signalling that Stanley is able to perceive the danger posed by Gloucester. Stanley was married to Richmond's mother, Margaret Beaufort and must have feared Gloucester moving against him. He warns of political intrigue: 'he says there are two Councils kept, / And that may be determin'd at the one / Which may make you and him rue at th'other'.[379] Stanley invites Hastings to escape with him to safety. Hastings is dismissive 'I wonder he's so simple / To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers.'[380] Hastings reassures Stanley that he knows 'our state secure', at which Stanley points out that those due to be executed at Pomfret[381] also 'had no cause to mistrust.'[382] Hastings is blind, and to the pursuivant boasts 'This day those enemies are put to death, / And I in better state than e'er I was!'[383] The audience knows the story and that Hasting's blindness, and reaction to the dream, will lead to his downfall just as it did with Clarence. Hastings believes that he is Richard's friend - but Richard has no friends.[384]

The final dream belongs to Richard, in Act 5 Scene 3. It is a fitful and restless dream before the battle at Bosworth Field. He has lost his wife, Anne, and his young son so he has no heir. This signals the failure of his kingship, and his death will mean the end of the

[378] *Richard III.* 3.2. 10.
[379] *Richard III.* 3.2. 11-13.
[380] *Richard III.* 3.2. 25-6.
[381] Pontefract
[382] *Richard III.* 3.2. 83.
[383] *Richard III.* 3.2. 101-2.
[384] *Henry VI Part III.* 5.6. 83. 'I am myself alone'.

House of York. Facially, Richard is said to have resembled his father, unlike his two brothers, and so the wheel of fortune turns not just for Richard but harks back to the events instigated by the Duke of York and the downfall of the whole house. Richard must feel this weight of history as he starts to dream. It occurs in a mirrored scene – Richmond is on one part of the stage whilst Richard sleeps in his tent, visible on the other side of the stage. Richmond sets the scene with his prayer 'Make us Thy ministers of chastisement / That we may praise Thee in the victory',[385] thus representing himself as God's agent of revenge and cementing Richard's place as an agent of evil.

Richard's first apparition is Prince Edward, who establishes the refrain detailing Richard's crime and the victim's curse; 'Think how thou stab'st me in my prime of youth / At Tewkesbury; despair therefore, and die.'[386] There is a procession of victims; Henry VI 'By thee was punched full of deadly holes. /Think on the Tower and me: despair and die; Harry the Sixth bids the despair and die!.[387] Henry turns to address Richmond 'Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror; / Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be King, / Doth comfort thee in thy sleep. Live and flourish!'[388] Henry VI is followed by Clarence 'by thy guile betray'd to death.....despair and die'. Turning to Richmond, Clarence declares 'The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee. Good angels guard thy battle; live and flourish.'[389] The pattern is set – the curse of Richard ('despair and die') matched with the exhortation to Richmond ('live and flourish').

[385] *Richard III*. 5.3. 114.
[386] *Richard III.* 5.3. 121-2.
[387] *Richard III.* 5.3. 129-31.
[388] *Richard III.* 5.3. 129-31.
[389] *Richard III.* 5.3. 134-38.

The ghosts of Rivers, Grey and Vaughan, follow the same pattern before Hastings himself joins the scene; 'Think on Lord Hastings; despair and die'. Hastings is followed by the two princes 'smother'd in the Tower' and to Richmond; 'Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy.' Anne appears 'that never slept a quiet hour with thee', but to Richmond; 'Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee'. Finally, Buckingham appears and follows the same refrain, the ninth ghost to follow the pattern. Richard remarks 'every tale condemns me for a villain'. His private words act as a judgement and portent;

> There is no creature loves me,
> And if I die, no soul will pity me –
> And wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself?
> Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
> Came to my tent, and everyone did threat
> Tomorrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.[390]

The final word is left to Richmond, who has slept 'The sweetest sleep and fairest-boding dreams.' Clarence dreams when it is too late for anything but regret. Hastings fails to acknowledge the power of dreams as portents, and so he dies. Dreams can foretell good as well as evil and with Richmond the structural device comes full circle. Good triumphs over evil as represented by the Tudor victory and the Wars of the Roses is over.

[390] *Richard III*. 5.3. 201-7.

Structural device: Prophecies, warnings and curses

The structure of the dream sequences is neatly balanced at the beginning, middle and end of the play, and similarly a series of curses is also established in the early scenes which come to fruition as the play progresses. The most important of these is the prophetic curse of Queen Margaret, who, despite the fact that she has, in reality, been repatriated to France some years before, enters towards the end of the reconciliation scene in Act 1 Scene 3. She appears as an old woman, perhaps already a ghost, and is the only other character to have asides to the audience, echoing the chorus of a Greek tragedy. From line 107 onwards, Richard is engaged in an argument with Queen Elizabeth and Rivers, but the commentary, out of sight, is from Margaret. As she comes forward and is seen, Gloucester calls her a 'foul wrinkled witch (l. 164) and refers back to the curse laid upon Margaret by his father, Richard, Duke of York at Wakefield after she mocked him with a paper crown before mopping his brow steeped in 'the faultless blood of pretty Rutland' (l. 178). Hastings remarks ''twas the foulest deed to slay that babe' (l. 183), even though Hastings was not present at Wakefield and Rutland was, in fact, 17 years of age and fighting, not 12 as reported by Shakespeare. Hastings' comment is the cue for Margaret to launch into her curse, in a 'tit-for-tat' sequence of revengeful predictions aimed at King Edward, Queen Elizabeth and others in the room;

> Rivers and Dorset, you were standers-by,
> And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son
> Was stabb'd with bloody daggers. God, I pray Him,
> That none of you may live his natural age,

But by some unlook'd accident cut off.[391]

Margaret is correct when she says that Hastings was there to witness the death of Prince Edward, effectively ending the claim of the House of Lancaster, and so she is foretelling the early deaths of both Rivers and Hastings, as well as Edward and the young princes. Margaret continues with the famous curse of Gloucester:

Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog,

Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity

The slave of Nature, and the son of hell;

Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,

Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins,

Thou rag of honour, thou detested.....[392]

She is interrupted as Gloucester shouts her name and hence, as Queen Elizabeth proclaims, 'Thus you have breath'd your curse against yourself' (l. 240). But Margaret promises Elizabeth 'The day will come that thou shalt wish for me / To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-back'd toad' (l. 245-6). To Buckingham, who is 'not spotted with our blood', she warms 'O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!', and 'remember this another day, / When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow, / And say, poor Margaret was a prophetess. (l. 299-301). Thus, the curses are laid with remarkable accuracy, giving away the sequence of future events (which are, of course, already well known to the audience), and providing a base point which can be referred back to as the events progress and the curses are fulfilled.

[391] Richard III. 1.3. 210-214.
[392] Richard III. 1.3. 228-233.

Hastings has again acted as the lynchpin, prompting Margaret's words and positioning him as one of the protagonists to feel the wrath of the curse. It is well signalled: Hastings' fate is presaged by Grey and Rivers at their execution at Pomfret;

> Grey : Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,
> When she exclaim'd on Hastings, you, and I,
> For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.
> Rivers: Then curs'd she Richard, then curs'd she Buckingham,
> Then curs'd she Hastings. O remember, God,
> To hear her prayer for them, as now for us;[393]

This sets up the pattern where those who are doomed reflect back to Margaret's words and leads directly into the scenes where Hastings is tricked and executed. He acknowledges 'O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse / Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head.'[394]

Margaret herself appears in Act IV Scene IV to 'sum up' the progress of her curse so far. Edward is dead, Clarence is dead and 'Th'adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, / Untimely smother'd in their dusky grave' (l. 69-70). She marks Hastings' flaw, signalling that his end was 'justified'. But Margaret's curse is not yet finished, for 'Richard lives, hell's black intelligencer' (l. 70-71) and 'dear God I pray, / That I may live and say 'The dog is dead.' (l. 77-78). Elizabeth, too, acknowledges the accuracy of Margaret's prophecies 'O, thou didst prophesy the time would come / That I should wish for thee to help me curse /

[393] *Richard III*. 3.1. 15-20.
[394] *Richard III*. 3.5. 92-93.

That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad.' (l. 79-81). Elizabeth urges Margaret to teach her how to curse and Margaret sums up the process;

> Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
> Compare dead happiness with living woe;
> Think that thy babes were sweeter than they were,
> And he that slew them fouler than he is;
> Bettering thy loss makes the bad-curser worse.
> Revolving this will teach thee how to curse. (l. 118-125).

When Buckingham rebels, Margaret's prediction that Gloucester will not be able to trust his friends is borne out, and when Buckingham is captured and executed he harks back to the trail of deaths so far: on 'Hastings, and Edward's children, Grey and Rivers, / Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward, / Vaughan, and all that have miscarried / By underhand, corrupted foul injustice',[395] and finally;

> Thus Margaret's curse falls heavy on my neck:
> 'When he,' quoth she, 'shall split they heart with sorrow,
> Remember, Margaret was a prophetess!. (l. 25-27)

As we hear the curses repeated, we are led to the final scene in which Richard is killed by Richmond. Following the pattern as set, we would expect Richard to hark back to Margaret's curse – but this does not happen. At the end of the battle in Scene V, Richard is killed but it is left to Richmond to refer back to the curse device 'The day is ours; the

[395] *Richard III*. 5.1. 3-10

bloody dog is dead'.[396] (Scene V l. 2) echoing Margaret's own words from Act IV Scene IV (l.78). Richmond, having been abroad, has not heard Margaret's curse, but by echoing it he ends the curse on her behalf, with Richard's death the final resolution.

When the structural devices are analysed in this way, it becomes clear that Shakespeare was not primarily interested in the character of Hastings for his own sake, but rather as a key component of the structure of the play. Hastings, like the other characters who suffer retribution, has character flaws – he is an adulterer with Shore's wife, he stood by whilst Prince Edward was killed, and he appears blind to Richard's true motives. This is very much the Tudor dramatist's perspective. An alternative view would be that he became the protector of Jane Shore after her loyal, ten-year relationship with Edward. There is no concrete evidence that Prince Edward was not killed in the heat of the battle, rather than murdered, and Hastings' 'blindness' could also be construed as the positive trait of loyalty. These, and the evidential facts of Hastings' life, are not Shakespeare's concern. As the pivot point when Gloucester (the dissembling plotter) becomes Richard (the tyrant), Hasting's death is the structural axis of the play. The related devices of prophecies, dreams, curses, and warnings weave the play together so that the action is foretold, enacted and resolved. The characters whose downfall is engineered by Richard are not blameless, albeit their punishments do not always fit the crime. Does Hastings deserve to lose his head? It is not so much about his own personal characteristics and career, but about his representation of the fates of all the characters in the play. There has never been any solid proof that Richard killed Henry VI, the young princes, Prince Edward or

[396] *Richard III*. 5.1. 2.

Clarence. But there are clear and evidential records of his execution of Hastings at the Tower on 13th June 1483, without trial. It is the pivot point upon which Shakespeare hangs his condemnation of Richard, the fulfilment of the prophecies and curses and the end of the House of York.

9: Conclusion

This study set out to explore the factual evidence for Hastings' life and character from a broad range of texts in order to provide a yardstick for Shakespeare's characterisation. There is no complete biography of Hastings, although some aspects have been covered in detail by historians.[397] Very few documents survive from the period and it must be acknowledged that there are still huge gaps, either because records were lost, or because important documents were deliberately destroyed after the reign of Richard III. The chosen texts outline distinct phases in Hastings' life, and these are important not just for an account of his actions, but because the people around him change and therefore develop their own perspectives on his life and character. This is brought home by a comparison of the ages of the various protagonists at the time of important events. For example, Hastings was ennobled for his bravery at Mortimer's Cross and Towton, establishing his reputation. In 1460, he was c. 30 years old, roughly the same age as the Earl of Warwick, but eleven years older than Edward IV. Gloucester was only 7 or 8, had experienced Ludlow and was sent abroad with George to Utrecht. By the time Warwick was killed at Barnet in 1471, Hastings was already in his forties, commanding one flank of Edward's army whilst the other is commanded by Gloucester, now aged 18 and building his own military reputation. Hastings' forces at Barnet were routed, so Gloucester's assessment of Hastings' military prowess would be based on this, not his exploits from ten years earlier which Gloucester did not witness.

[397] Carpenter, Dunham, Grummitt, Meek, Rowney, Westervelt, et al.

Equally, the writers of literary texts have their own perspectives: Commynes respected Hastings after meeting him during the exile period in Burgundy and again at Picquigny in 1475. His respect continues after his death,[398] but is not based on Hastings' military reputation but his actions as a courtier and public servant, in a similar administrative role to that of Commynes himself. Mancini is in London for less than a year, had no personal knowledge of Hastings as far as we know, and contributed little real life experience other than what he could pick up from sources or street gossip.

When Edward came to the throne, Hastings was already 30 years old, a retainer of Richard, Duke of York, but largely undocumented. It is worth considering this 'dark' period because his education, culture, morals and character would have been set during this time and so what we read in later texts, for example the letters and legal documents, reflects what he must have learnt in the York household. He had clearly been well educated, understanding business, contracts, diplomatic protocols and, in all probability, the economic strategies of the Duke of York which became evident during his Protectorate. This explains how Edward IV was able to act so swiftly to start to improve the crown finances and the economic health of the country. Warwick and Hastings were the bridge from York to Edward, both father figures in their own way. Warwick, however, thought that this gave him the right to rule through Edward, while Hastings knew that everything he had came from the king, so he took the role of second in command, the trusted servant, supporter rather than challenger. Hastings became the one who executed the strategies through his appointments at the Mint, Calais and as Lord Chamberlain.

[398] He was writing in 1498

In 1483, when Edward suddenly died, Hastings' contemporaries were split into three camps. The 'old school' consisted of men such as John Morton and Thomas Stanley, veterans of the Wars of the Roses and with backgrounds in public service. They would have acknowledged Hastings' achievements and admired his loyalty. The 'new money' was represented by the Woodvilles, with various reasons to resent Hastings going back to that original marriage contract in 1464. Finally, the 'young bloods' were represented by Gloucester and Buckingham (aged 32 and 27 respectively) who would not have remembered Hastings' military triumphs but did remember his administrative capabilities, which is why Gloucester kept him on in Calais and reappointed him Master of the Mint.

Hastings took care to manage his public image throughout his life, just as the Yorkists managed the propaganda through the earlier chronicles. His military reputation was established after Towton, but after Barnet this was in the past and it can be no accident that the *Arrivall*[399] makes much of the fact that Hastings provided three thousand men and that Commynes says, 'he told me this himself'.[400] Hastings probably directed the author of the *Arrivall* in the same manner. In his later life, he massages his public image to be one of unwavering loyalty, reinforced in the extraordinary clauses in his will. This is the reputation that is carried into the sources used by Shakespeare, but, as we have seen, they do not reflect accurately upon Hastings' entire life.

[399] *The History of the Arrival of Edward IV*. Embree and Tavormina. 157-191.
[400] Commynes. 187.

Just as Hastings' life can be viewed in phases, this also holds true for the sources. The literary texts evolve from the diary-like entries of the chronicles through the eye-witness account of Commynes to the performance piece of Mancini, moving from medieval history to early modern drama. Commynes' biographical detail does comment on the behaviour of princes and the qualities of men, but it is not until More that someone tries to stand in Hastings' own shoes and imagine what he is thinking and feeling. This is the evolution of the character, and Shakespeare's inheritance, giving him a pen portrait of the fifty-year-old man, not the swashbuckling 30-year-old of Towton or the clever servant so admired by Louis XI.

So how does Shakespeare's characterisation measure up? If we consider the breadth of Hastings' life and the different aspects of his character that have been uncovered, it does not. Shakespeare's portrayal is a product of his sources, and these are limited to the man at the centre of the drama in 1483. In 1593, no-one remembers Towton other than by legend, but they do know the image of Hastings touted in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, a populist portrayal of adultery and betrayal. They also believe that Richard III killed the princes in the tower, and the conjuring of this tyrant is the real focus of Shakespeare's play – not a history, but a drama. By looking at a wide variety of sources and building a more complete picture of Hastings over his lifetime, the comparison with the character appearing in Shakespeare allows not only the identification of shortcomings, but a reason to assess why Shakespeare has made the choices that he has.

Hastings is not the main character in *Richard III,* he is the foil for the tyrant. Shakespeare manipulates him not as a person, but as a structural device – using him as a pillar on

which to hang the dream sequences, prophecies and curses which pepper the action and drive the moral outcomes. Hastings has to stand in for the princes as the epitome of innocence diametrically opposed to the evil of Richard, as they are too young to provide convincing characters to mirror the tyrant. Shakespeare sees Hastings as the aging administrator, competent, but blinded to the machinations of Gloucester. He appears almost in shock at the death of his friend and king, a shock which dents his strategic awareness, which we know he possesses as evidenced throughout his life. He is shocked and blindsided, allowing Shakespeare to present an almost two-dimensional character, a representation of loyalty worthy of a character in a morality play.

Is Shakespeare's portrayal inadequate or even an injustice, given the full facts of Hastings' life? This study has shown that Hastings was much more than a two-dimensional character and through this wide variety of texts it has uncovered a rounded persona, providing a yardstick against which to measure Shakespeare's portrayal. Hastings was engaged with Yorkist strategies before the death of Richard, Duke of York, and able to put them into practice serving Edward IV in stabilising the country's finances. He was a capable military and administrative leader, confidante and friend. However, it is not Shakespeare's purpose to provide an 'adequate' or historically accurate portrayal, but to use him as the structural bones of the play – it is at Hastings' execution when Gloucester's ambition and ruthlessness become apparent to the other characters on stage – the pivot point of the play. Neither is it an injustice for Hastings to be represented in this way. It is clear from Hastings' will that he wanted to be remembered as the loyal servant and trusted friend, and, in essence, this is what Shakespeare gives us. Given that the *Mirror for Magistrates* majors on his adultery and relationship with Shore's wife,

Shakespeare is in fact bringing the focus of his character back to the qualities of loyalty and trust for which he wanted to be remembered. I would hope that this study has illuminated aspects of Hastings' character which adds depth to our assessment of him, but do not detract from the Shakespearean portrayal. He might be representing the values of loyalty and trust, but this gives a depth of character beyond the simplicity of the portrayals of, say, Edward IV or his queen, Elizabeth Woodville. Shakespeare finds a focal point in Hastings. One suspects he might have even liked him as a character, and because Shakespeare has let the audience in on Gloucester's motives early in the play, they are willing him to take notice of Stanley's dream and make his escape, not mocking him for his blindness, even though everyone knows what the outcome will be. Because of the power of *Richard III*, Hastings, once an insignificant member of the gentry, is not forgotten, but known today as a loyal man, some five and a half centuries after his death.

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Appendix A: Diplomatic Letters

Text of letter to Lord Lannoy 7th August 1463 sourced from Cora L. Scofield. *The Life of Edward IV*. Vol. 2, Appendix I. 461. *Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. français 6970, f. 361.*

A:1 Lettre de W. Hastings á Mr. de Lannoy

Tres honoré seigneur, apres toute due et cordiale recommandation avec tres affectueux et especial desir d'estre souvent acertené de vostre bonne et honorable prosperité et santé. Je vous mercie aussi cordalement que ie puis de vos lettres par le porteur de cettes a moy delivreés par lesquelles il semble que diverses lettres que vous ay envoieés ne vous ont pas eté delivrées, dont suis tres deplaisant, et que semblablement m'avez rescript plusieurs lettres et des nouvelles par icelles que la pluspart ne sont venues a ma connoissance par defaut de passaige vous signifiant que les Ambassadeurs de mon souverain Seigneur sont apressés a estre de brief a la convention appointée a St Omer, ou ils eussent piecha esté n'eust esté la grande entreprise des anchiens ennemis de mond. souverain seigneur, ceu d'Ecosse, confederés avec ses grands traitres rebelles, Henry, soy apelant Roy, et Marguerite, sa femme, faite sur son Chastel de Norham par le Roy d'Ecosse avec tout le pouvoir de sa terre garny de la grosse ordonnance d'icelle assiege royalement et environne et au default de … Chevalerie, assisté par la Reyne d'Ecosse et lad. Marguerite, cuidanté que la crainte et peur de leur grande severité eussent peu vaincre le noble Royaume d'Angleterre, dont un Chevalier, le noble et vaillant Sr, Mr. le Comte de Warvich, sujet de mon souverain Seigneur, avec le marchiers seulement du pays d'Ecosse ont remué led. siege, Led. Roy d'Ecosse avec son pouvoir fuyant de peur de sa venue et lad. Marguerite sans surgier outre la mer avec son Capitaine, Sr. Piers de Brezé, et n'en poy effrayé Mond. souverain seigneur cependant estant en ses desports et esbatemens en la chasse sans aucun doubte ou effraiments de sa très honourable personne ne d'aucuns de ses suiets ença lesd. marches et lad. contree n'a pas seulement recouy led. chastel poyenavant rescous d'un autre siege par mon tres honoré frere, le Sire de Montagu, tres honorablement mais aussi mis a fuite led. Roy d'Ecosse et tout sond. pourvoir a leur grand honte et villenie et deshonneur et poursui en Ecosse ars degasté et détruit du meilleur de son pays depouillé et abbatu plusieurs forteresses, tué beaucoup d'Ecossois et recouvers et pris prisonniers en grand nombre et fait la plus grande journee sur eux que ne fut oye estre faite de plusieurs ans passés ainsi que j ne me doute point qu'ils ne s'en repentant, et jusqu'au jour de Jugement s'en repentiront; la faveur et assistance qu'ils ont donné aud. Hery et Marguerite et combien que leurd. repentance n'est ignorée toute parfaite, j'espere que de brief elle prendra tel effect et conclusion que sera a memorance a la perpetuelle desolation et misere de la nation des Ecossois a grace de Dieu.

A Fodringhen le 7 aoust 1463. Vostre W Hasting.

A:2 Translation (author's own):

Most honoured Lord, after all due and friendly recommendation with much affectionate and special desire to be often assured of your good and honourable prosperity and health. I thank you as cordially as I can for your letters delivered to me by this carrier, from which it seems that various letters previously sent have not been delivered, of which I am most displeased, and that similarly that you have written back several letters, and that news from there for the most part has not come to my attention, not getting through, indicating that the Ambassadors of my sovereign Lord are compelled to be in attendance at the appointed agreement at St. Omer, where they should have been had they not been caught by the actions of the ancient enemies of my sovereign Lord, those from Scotland conspiring with the great traitors and rebels, Henry, who calls himself king and Margaret, his wife, taking place at Norham Castle by the King of Scotland with all the power of his army furnished with large ordinance (guns) from here besieging royally and about and with a lack of chivalry, assisted by the Queen of Scotland and the said Margaret, considering that the dread and fear of their great might could conquer the noble Kingdom of England, in which a Knight, the noble and valiant sire the Count (Earl) of Warwick, the subject of my sovereign Lord, with only the borderers of the country of Scotland has lifted the aforementioned siege. The King of Scotland with his armies fled from fear from that place and the said Margaret without crossing the sea with her captain, Lord Piers de Brezé, was unable to frighten my sovereign lord however, being focused and distracted by hunting without any doubt or fear for his very honourable person or any of his subjects being here in the aforementioned borders and region. Not only did my very honourable brother, Lord Montagu, nobly rescue the aforementioned castle but he also put to flight the King of Scotland and the others, with great shame and villainy and dishonour and pursued them into Scotland where he wasted and destroyed the best of his country, stripped and demolished many fortresses, killed many Scotsmen and recovered and took a great number of prisoners and had the greatest day over them seen for several years past such that I do not doubt now that they repent, and until the day of Judgement they will repent, the favour and assistance that they have given to Henry and Margaret and however much their repentance it will not be considered perfect (enough) (or genuine?), and I hope that it will soon take effect and in conclusion be a reminder of the perpetual desolation and misery of the Scottish nation, by the grace of God.

From Fotheringhay, 7th August 1463. Yours, W. Hastings

A:3 Louis XI documents September 1477

No. 72

Calmette & Perinelle. 376-7. Bibliothèque Nationale, f. fr. 10187, fol. 123-124

Instructions de Louis XI à Olivier le Roux. Vers Septembre 1477

Instructions a maistre Olivier le Roux, sr de Beauvoir, conseiller et maister de comptes du Roy nostre sire, de ce le Roy lui a chargé dire a tres hault et tres puissant prince le roy d'Angleterre, son frere et cousin.

Premierement, apres les presentacions des lettres du Roy et recommandacions, dira audit seigneur roy d'Angleterre quy le Roy a sceü par ses derrains ambaxadeurs du bon estat et prosperité de sa personne, don't il a esté et est tres joyeulx, et comme de la sienna propre.

Aussi le Roy a sceü par sesdiz ambaxadeurs le bonne recepcion qu'il leur a faicte et les grans et honnorables termes qu'il leur a tenuz et fait tenir en besoignant es matieres pou lesquelles il les avoit envoyez devers lui: dont le Roy le remercye de tres bon cuere.

Pareillement dira audit seigneur roy d'Angleterre comme le Roy a sceü, tant par sesdiz ambaxadeurs que par Nort-Roy son roy d'armes, les points et articles qui restoient a conclure des chose qui avoyent et ont esté pourparlées, et que pour y faire fin avoir esté faicte ouverture de prendre jour, auquel ledit seigneur roy d'Angleterre et le Roy envoyerroient personnages ayans povoir d'y prendre conclusion.

Item, dira que le Roy sceit congnoist veritablement qu'il n'a point de si bon amy en tout ce qui le touche que ledit roy d'Angleterre, par quoy il ne vault point que les choses soient concludes hors de sa presences. Et pour faire ladicte conclusion, fera partir ses gens et ambaxadeurs dedens la fin de ce moys pour aller devers lui avec povoir tout ample et autant que s'il y estoit en personne. Et des ce que ses derrains ambaxadeurs allerent devers ledit, seigneur roy d'Angleterre, ils eussent porté povoir tout ample, se n'eust esté que l'on advertissoit le Roy de tous coustez que, par le moyen de madame de Bourgogne et de monsr. Le chamberllan, l'appointement estoit fait de l'autre cousté, et, veü que le Rou y alloit a la bonne foy, il eust eu honte d'estre refuse.

Item, se plaindra de la part du Roy en bonne façon et dira que, non obstant que ceste querelle icy soit du Royaume et que ce soit confiscacion escheüe ou royaume comme plusieurs confiscacions qui sont escheüttes audit seigneur roy d'Angleterre en son Royaume, et que par les amitiez et intelligences d'entre le Roy et ledit seigneur roy d'Angleterre l'un desdiz roys ne puisse recueillir, soustenir, aider, supporter ou favoriser les subgeetz rebelles et desobeissans a l'aute, et que feu le duc Charles ait toute sa vie estérebelle et desobeissant subgect du Roy et du Royaume, usurpent ses droiz souverains sans jamais avoir voulu faire les hommages et readvances des terres qu'il tenoit de la couronne, et depuissa mort mademoiselle de Bourgogne a continue en semblable rebellion et desobeissance, et par ce ayent chascun d'eulx confisqué tout ce qu'ilz tiennent du Royaume, touteffoiz il a semble que au commencement il vouloit soustenir monsr de Clarence a avoir en mariage mademoiselle de Bourgogne, qui eust esté plus en

son prejudice : et s'il eust bien oy les langaiges qui s'en disorient par deça communement et que ce que madame de Bourgogne en disoit secretement a ceulx du païs en qui elle se fyoit, mesmement a de bien grans seigneurs qui ne le celoient pas au Roy, et des choses qu'il devoit faire en Angleterre s'il eust eu les seigneuries de par deça, il esut cogneü clerement que ledit mariage eust esté plus a son desavantage que a cellui du Roy.

Item, dira que neantmoins toutes ces choses le Roy est deliberé de conclure de sa part les choses qui ont esté ouvertes. Et pour ce faire envoyers devers luy ses ambaxadeurs, ainsi que dit est, pour le tout conclure en sa presence.

Item, sentira s'il y a point d'ambaxade du filz de l'empereur ne d'autre prince ou seigneur d'Allemaigne ne de mademoiselle de Bourgogne ou du païs de Flanders devers ledit seigneur roy d'Angleterre et quelz termes l'on leur tient, ausii quelles Nouvelles courent par dela, et de tout en advertira le Roy en plus grant diligence que pourra.

A:4 Translation (author's own)

Louis XI documents 1477
No. 72
Calmette & Perinelle. 376-7. Bibliothèque Nationale, f. fr. 10187, fol. 123-124.

These are instructions from Louis XI to Olivier le Roux, around September 1477.

Instructions to Master Olivier le Roux, Lord of Beauvoir, counsellor, and master of accounts of our lord the King, which the King has charged him to convey to the very high and powerful prince, the King of England, his brother and cousin.

Firstly, after presenting the letters from the King and his recommendations, he shall inform the said King of England that the King has learned through his recent ambassadors about the good state and prosperity of his person, which has made him very joyful, as with his own state.

Likewise, the King has learnt through his said ambassadors about the good reception they received and the great and honourable terms that were used in discussion the matters for which they were sent to him. The King thanks him most sincerely for this.

Similarly, he shall inform the said King of England that the King has learnt, both from his said ambassadors and from North-Roy, his herald-at-arms, the points and articles that remain to be concluded concerning matters that have been discussed. And that to bring these matters to a conclusion, an offer was made to set a date on which the said King of England and King would send individuals with the authority to reach a conclusion.

Item, he shall express that the King knows truly that he has no better friend in all matters concerning him than the said King of England, which is why it is not worth concluding matters without his presence. And to achieve this conclusion, he will send his people and ambassadors to him within the end of this month, giving them full and ample authority as if he were present in person. And from the time when his recent ambassadors went to the said King of England, they would have carried full authority were it not for the news that reached the King from all sides, indication that an agreement had been reached on the other side through the efforts of Madame of Burgundy and Monsieur the Chamberlain. Given that le Roux was going there in good faith, it would have been shameful to be refused.

Furthermore, he shall convey the King's concerns in a proper manner and state that, despite this conflict being about his realm and considered a confiscation in the kingdom, as many confiscations have been made in the realm of the said King of England, due to the alliances and understandings between the King and the said King of England, that neither of them should support, sustain, aid, encourage or favour rebellious or disobedient subjects against each other. And as the late Duke Charles was a rebel and disobedient subject of the King and the kingdom throughout his life, usurping his sovereign rights without ever being willing to perform homage and acknowledgement of the lands he held from the crown. And after his death, Mademoiselle of Burgundy

continued with the same rebellion and disobedience, and therefore both of them have confiscated all that they held in the realm.

Nevertheless, it seemed that initially he wanted to support the Duke of Clarence in marrying Mademoiselle of Burgundy, which would have been more detrimental to him. And if he had heard the conversations that were commonly being heard here and what Mademoiselle of Burgundy secretly mentioned to those in the region she trusted, especially to very great lords who did not keep it from the King, about the actions he would have taken in England if he had acquired lordships here, it would have been clearly evident that the said marriage would have been more to his disadvantage than that of the King.

Item, he shall state that, nevertheless, despite all these circumstances, the King is resolved to conclude from his side the matters that have been opened. And to achieve this, he will send his ambassadors to him, as mentioned, to conclude everything in his presence.

Item, he shall ascertain whether there are any ambassadors from the Emperor's son or any other prince or lord of Germany, or from Mademoiselle of Burgundy or from the region of Flanders, sent to the said King of England, and what terms are being used with them. As well as what news is circulating over there. He shall inform the King about all of this with the utmost urgency possible.

A:5 Paston Letters

1) Letter from William Lord Hastings to Sir John Middleton and John Paston 16th September 1473

Gairdner, James. *The Paston Letters*. Facsim. ed. Gloucester New York: A. Sutton St. Martin's press, 1987.Vol. 5 p 194 Letter 839

To my right hertily belovd frends and felaws, Sir John of Middelton, and Sir John Paston, Knights. After herty recommendacion, I thank you of the gode attendance that ye yeve unto the Kings counsail at Calais; and the gode and effectuelle devoires that ye putte you in to assiste my depute Sir John Scot, in alle suche things as mowe concerne the saufgarde of my charge there. Leting you wite, that if ther be any thing that I can and may do for you, I shal with right gode wil performe it to my power.
And I preye you to recommaunde me to my Lady Howard, my Lady Bourgchier, and all othre ladies and gentilwomen of the saide towne. And in likewise to the Mayre, Lieutenant, and felaship of the staple; my felaws the souldeours, and all other suche as ye shal seme gode. And oure Lor sende you your desirs.

Writen at Notyngham, the xvj. day of Septembre.

Sir Joh Paston, I pray you to yeve credens to suche thing as my depute shall shew you fro me, and conforme you to the same. Your felaw, Hastyngs
(note: any specific instruction to Sir John Paston is sent by another route and not included in the open letter).

2) Letter from Lord Hastings to John Paston April 26th, 1474 (but more probably 1483, when Sir Ralph Hastings was Lieutenant of Guines).

Gairdner, James. *The Paston Letters*. Facsim. ed. Gloucester New York: A. Sutton St. Martin's press, 1987.Vol. 5 p 204 Letter 847

To my right trusty and welbeloved servaunt, John Paston, Squier.
John Paston, I recommaunde me unto you. And whereas I appointed and desired you to goo unto Guysnes to yeve youre attendaunce and assistaunce upon my brother Sir Rauf Hastings in all suche thinges as concerne the suretie and defense of the Castell of Guysnes during his infirmyties; it is shewed unto me that you have full truly and diligently acquyted you unto my said brother, in all his besynesses syth you comyng thider. Whereof I thanke you hertly. And as I conceive to my grete comfort and gladnesse, my saide brother is wele recovered and amended, thanked be God. And soo I truste he may nowe spare you. Whereupon I have written unto him, if he may soo doo, to licence you to come over unto me ayen. Wherefore I woll and desire you, th'assent of my saide brother had, to dispose you to come over in all goodly haste, as well for such grete maters, as I fele by your ffrends, ye have to doo here, as to yeve your attendaunce upon me. And your retourne shall be to my welcome.

From London, the xxvj. Day of Avrill.

(Hastings' own hand) I pray you in no wise to depart as yet without my brother Roaf asent and agreement; and recommaund me to my syster, all my nieces, to the constabyll, and to all Ryves (reeves).
Your tru frend, Hastynges.

Appendix B – Legal Documents

B:1 Hastings' Last Will and Testament – 27th June 1481

Sourced from: Nicholas, N. H., Esq. *Testamenta Vetusta*. Volume I. London: Nichols and Son, 1826. 368-375.

In the name of God, Amen. I William Hastyngs, Knt. Lord Hastyngs, being in hool minde, &c. the 27th day of June, in the yere, MCCCCLXXXI (1481), ordeign, &c. my last will and testament, as well of my land as of my goods, in the forme articulierly following: First, I com'yt and bequeathe my sowle unto Almighty God my Maker and Redemer, humbly besechyng hym to accept hit to his mercy and grace. And, forasmoche as the Kyng, of his abundant grace, for the trew service that I have doon, and at the leest entended to have doon, to his grace, hath willed and offred me to be buryed in the Church or Chapel of Seynt George at Wyndesore, in a place by his grace assigned in which College his highness is disposed to be buryed; I therefore bequeath my simple body to be buryed in the sayd Chapell and College in the said place, and wolle that there be ordeigned a tumbe convenient for me by myne executors; and for the costs of the same I bequeath c marks. Also I wolle that myne executors dispose and gif to the ministers of divine service and funeral observances, the day of my burying, and to the pore knights there present the same day, and in other dedes of almes, by their discretion xx *li*. of lawful money of England; also I woll, that in all goodly haste after my decease, a juell of gold or sylver, to the value of xx *li*. be given, to the Deane and Chanons of the said Chapell and College, there to remain perpetually, to the honour of God, and for a memorial for me; also I woll that my feoffees, by the oversight of myne executors, gif and amortize lands to the yearly value of xx li. over all charges, to the Deane and Chanons aforesayd, and to their successors, to the intent that they shall perpetually fynde a preste, to say daylie masse and diving service at the awter next to the place where my body shall be buryed, in the sayd Chapell of College; and there to pray daylie for the King's prosperous estate during his life; and after his dethe for his sowle, for the sowles of me, my wif, and for alle Christen sowles, &c.; and the same Dean and Chanons, and their successors, shall daylie finde, &c. brede and wyne, wex, vestiments, boke, chalice, and all other ornaments necessarie for the same priests, &c. and shall kepe a solempne obite yerely in the said Chapell and College, at such day, and under such forme, as by myne executors and the said Dean and Chanons shall be ordeigned and agreed; also I wull that myn executors gif to the said Dean and Chanons two vestiments, and alle other things thereto belonging, two awter clothes, a masse-book, a chalice, a pax brede, and two cruets of sylver, to be occupied by the said preste for the time being, and his successors, at the said awter; also I wolle that myne executors dispose among pore people, by their discretion at the day of burying xx li. of lawful money, &c.; also I wolle that myne executors, in all goodly haste after my decese, giff to the Abbot and Convent of Sulby, in the county of Northampton, xi li. of lawful money of England, to the relief and increce of the same house, and s oote of my best vestments, an awter cloth of like colour to the same vestments, a chalice, two candlesticks, two basyns of sylver, and other ornaments of the Chirche, to pray for the sowles of me, my wyf, myn ancestors there buryed, and all other myn ancestours, and alle Christen sowles; also I woll that lands and tenements, to the yerely valew of v marks, and the Chirches of Wistow and Lubbenham, be lawfully appropriated for ever to the same

Abbot and Convent, and their successors, for the which the same Abott and Convent, shall do solempnly, with note, Placebo and Dirige; and on the morrow, masse of Requiem, with note, in the quire of the same Abbey, for the sowles of me, myn wife, myn ancestors there lying specially, with all other my ancestors, and all Christen sowles; and for ever the same day yearly shall say Placebo and Dirige, and masse of Requiem, on the morrow, for my sowle, and the sowles afore rehersed; and for ever, the day of my said obit, shall giff almes among pore folke, for my sowle, xx s. in money; and that a preste, being one of the said Convent, shall daily for ever say a masse of Requiem at an awter to be ordeigned, by the discretion of my executors, in the said abbey, for my sowle, and for the sowles above rehearsed; and that every preste of the said Convent, saying masse in the said Abbey daily, for ever, say an especial collect, in every of their masses, for my sowle and all the sowles before reherced, after such ordinance as by me of myne executors shal be made; also I will, that myne executors do yerely pay unto the same Abbot and his successors xxv marks of lawful money, unto the time that lands to the value of five marks by yere, and the said Chirches, &c. be lawfully amortized, and appropriated to the said Abby; also I woll that myne executors, at the time of my burial, or before, as soone as notice may come to them of my dethe, shall make a thousand prestes say a thousand Placebo and Dirige, with M masses for my sowle; and every preste therefore to have vi *d*.; and that all the same observance be doon in oon day, if hit be reasonably possible; also that c li. be disposed among pore folkes, as soon as it may be conveniently, after my decese; and to the Friers of Notingham, Northampton, Leicestre, and Derby, and to other persons and pore folkes of the said shires, by the discretion of my said executors; also, I bequeath to the Abbot and Convent of Leicestre a soot of vestments to the value of xx *li.* or else xx *li.* of lawful money, to syng Placebo and Dirige with note; and on the morrow masse of Requiem with note, for my sowle, and the sowles afore reherced; also, I will that the Gray Friers of Leicestre x *li*. have to pray for me; and either of th'other two houses of Friers of the same towne c s.; and to every parish Church of the same town XL *s.*; also, I will that the Deane and Chapter of the New warke of Leicestre have xli, of lawfull money, to do an obite, and to pray fro my sowle; also a jewell of gold or sylver, to the value of x li. there to remain for a perpetuall memoriall, with aultar-clothes and other ornaments to the value of xx li. to pray for my sowle; also, I bequeath to the Bedehouse within the same Colledge, x li. to pray for my sowle; also I woll that myne executors do make new and edify the Chapell of our Lady, called the Chapell on the Brigge, at Leicestre; and for the making thereof c li.; also, that they finde a preste in the same Chapell by the space of seaven yeres next after my decese, to say daily masse, &c. in the same Chapell, and other prayers, as shall be ordeigned by myne executors, and for the performing thereof; Item, I bequeath to the parish Churche of Asheby la Zowche a sute and vestments, with an awter-cloth according, to the value of c s. to pray for my sowle; also, to fynde a preste to say daylie for me and the sowles afore reherced, masse there, and other prayers, for the doing thereof I bequeathe fifty pounds of lawfull money of England; also I wolle that my gown of velvet, to make a vestment of, and c s. of lawful money of England, to pray for my sowl and the sowles afore reherced; also I wolle that myne executors giff to my sister Dame Elizabeth Donne c marks; also I bequeathe to the marriages of my nieces, the daughters of John Brokesby, cc marks; also I bequeathe to the marriage of the daughter of my brother Ferrers, c marks; also where George Erle of Shrewsbury, whose warde and marriage to me is granted, hath married Anne my daughter; I woll that if the same Erle should die, as God defend, before any carnall knowlydge betwyne the same Erle and her

had, that then Thomas, brother to the same Erle take to wif her the same Anne, if the law of the Chirche will suffer or license hit; and if it happen the same Anne to die before any carnall knowlich, that then ward and marriage of the same Erle, and of his said brother, be sold, and the money thereof comyng, be employed for the performance of this my said will, and for the wele of my soul; and if it happen the said Erle, or, after his dethe, the said Thomas, after that he be maryed to the said Anne, do disagree to the said marriage, at such an age as they may do so by the law, then I, wolle that myne executors giff to my said daughter, M li. for her marriage; also I bequeathe to my said doghter plate to the value of fifty marks; and beddynge, chamberyngs, and other stud, for her convenient, to the value of c marks, whereof I wolle that she be of the age of 18 yeres; also, where I have the ward and marriage of Edward Trussell, I woll that it be sold, and the money employed to the performance of this my will, and for the wele of my sowle; and if my brother Sir John Donne woll be the said ward, I will that he be preferred therein before any other by XL li.; also I wolle that my feoffees of the manors of Bewyk and Thurkelby in Holderness, in the county of York, Bolton-percy in the shire of the citty of Yorke; the manor of Barowe, and the hundred of Framland, in the county of Leicestre; the maner called Everingham-fee, in the county of Nottingham, the maner of Fynchley, in the county of Middlesex, the rape of Hastyngs, in the county of Sussex, shall suffer myne executors to take the issues thereof, unto the time, &c. that they have performed this my will, and payd my debts, &c. ; also I wille that my feoffees on the maner of Lamley and Bleseby, in the county of Nottingham, the maner of Drakenage, in the countie of Warwick, the maner of Sutton in Holdernesse, make estate thereof to Richard my son, when he cometh to the age of 18 yeres, to have hym and to the heires of his body; the remainder to the heires male of my fader's body; the remainder to my right heires; in like wise, of the maner of Arnall, in the countie of Nottingham; Fickney, Little Assheby, and Brentyngthorp, in the county of Leicestre, make estate thereof, to my said son William, when he cometh to the age of 18 yeres, and to the heires male of his body; the remainder to the said Richard my son, and to the heires male of his body; the remainder to the heires male of my fader's body; the remainder to my right heires; also I wolle that every of my said two sons have plate to the value of c li. ; and either of them chamberyng, beddyng, and other stuff conventient for them, &c. to the value of c li,; also I wolle the my feoffees make estate to Katherine my wife, immediately after my decese, of the maners of Stoke-Daubeny, Wilberston, and Sutton, in the county of Northampton; the maner of Edmonton in Tottenham in the county of Middlesex; of Kerby, Lubbesthorpe, Braunston, Bagworth, Thorneton, and the park of Bagworth and Kerby, in the countie of Leicestre; of the manors of Welborne and Aslakby, in the shire of Lincolne, for terme of her life; so that the sayd Katherine, &c. relese her dower in all the same maners of Bewyk, Thurcelby, &c. and lands before assigned to perform my will; also I, in most humble wise, beseche the King's grace to take the governaunce of my son and heir; as is straitly as to me is possible, I charge myne heir, on my blessing, to be faythfull and true to the King's grace, to my lord Prince, and and their heires; also I will that myne executors, in the disposition of such goods as in generalitie in this my will be assigned to be disposed by theym, for the wele of my sowle, have tenderly in remembrance and preferment the said Abbey of Sulby; to the intent that they the more specially shall pray for the sowles of me, my wife, and the sowles afore reherced. And, for the performyng and executing of this my last will and testament, I ordeyned and make myn executors, Kateryn myn entyerly beloved wyffe, myn eldest son Sir Edward Hastynges, Knyght; Sir William Husee, Knyght, Cheffe Juge of the King's

Benche; Richard Piggotte, one of the King's Serjants at the Lawe; and for thayr labours and pyne that they shall have for and aboute the performyng and executing thys my last will and testament, I wyll that Sirs Wylliam Huse and Richard Pygotte have eyther of thaym XL li. of lawfull money of Ingland; praying and requiring my wyffe and eldest son, and the said Huse and Pygotte, to take the charge upon thaym to se thexecucion, of this my last will and testament, after the true entent thereof, as my specyall trust is in thaym, and they wyll answer before God. And, for the more perfite and sure execucion of this my said last wyll and testament, I ordayne and make the Ryght Reverend Fader in God John Byshop of Ely (Dr. John Morton) my good Lord, and also John Lord Dynham my good lord and cosyn, surveyors of this my said last wyll and testament; humbly and most hertely besechyng ther good lordships to teke the labor and charge thereof upon thaym, in whom I put my synguler and special trust, for the wele of my sowle; and for theyr labor, I wyll that eyther of my sayd Lords have XL marks of lawfull money of Ingland. And, in witnesse that thys ys my last wyll and testament, I did wryte thys clause and last article wyth myn own hand at London the XXVII day of June, the yere of our Lord God abovesaid, and in the yere of my soverayne Lord Kyng Edward the IVth XXL; whose good grace, in the most humble wise, I beseche to be good and tender and gracious Lord to my sowle, to be good and gracious Soverayne Lord to my wyfe, my son, and myn eyre, and to all my children, whom I charge upon my blessing to be true sogetts and servants to you my Soverayne Lord under God, and to your eyre, and all your issue; and beseche you, Soverayne Lord, also to be good Lord to my surveyors and executors in executing this my last wyll and testament, as my most synguler trust is in your good grace before all earthly greatnesse, as wele for my wyfe and chyldren, and to my executors and surveyors in executing this my last wyll and testament. Signed with my hand, and sealed with the seal of myn armys, the day and yere aforesaid.

B:2 Last Will and Testament of Lady Katherine Hastings

22nd November 1503

Sourced from: Baldwin, D. *The Kingmaker's Sisters – Size Powerful Women in the Wars of the Roses*. Stroud: The History Press, 2009. Appendix Two. 146-151.

I Katherine lady Hastings, widow, late the wife of William late Lord Hastings, having perfect memory and hole mind, considering that nothing is more certain than death, and therefore at all times willing to be ready unto death, and to look for the time of the coming of the same, in such wise that death stele not upon (me) unprepared; whereunto is required not onely disposition ghostly, but also of such goods as God of his immeasurable goodness hath lent me the use and exercise of; intending, through his special grace, so to passe by these temporalls and momentary goods, that I shall not lose eternal (life); make, ordain, and declare, this my testament and last will, in manner and ford following: First, I most humbly bequeath my soule to God Almighty, my Redeemer, to our blessed lady St Mary the Virgin, and to all the Company of Heaven; and my body to be buried in our Lady Chappell within the parish church of Ashby de la Zouch, between the image of our Lady and the place assigned for the vicar's grave. Item, for my mortuary, I bequeath according to my custome. Item, I bequeath to the cathedral church of Lincolne twenty pounds. Item, I bequeath to the high altar in the parish church of Ashby aforesaid xxs. Item, I will that a priest be found to sing in the same chappell for my ffadyr and my lady my modar, my lord my husband's soules; for my soule, and for all Christian soules, and in special for those soules which I am most bounden to cause to be prayed for, for the space of three years next ensuing after my departing; and the said priest to receive yearly during the said three years for his stipend six pounds: and if my priest, sir William Englonde, be contented to pray for me in the said place, and for the other abovesaid,, then I woll that he be admitted to the said service before any other priest. And I bequeath to the said chappell a suit of vestments of bawdekyn, red and green, and my little gilded chalice, a printed mass-book, and a printed portvous, which I will my said priest have the use of, for the said three years, at the times when he shall be disposed to say his service divine in the said place. Item, I bequeath to the said church of Ashby seaven surplus (surplices), to be occupied (kept) and used by the ministers that shall doe service in the said church. Item, I will that my Masse (book), covered with red velvet, that is occupied in the chappell, be given to a poor church after the direction of myne executors. Item, I woll that the colledge of Newarke of Leicestre have, to them and their successors for ever, all my lands and tenements, with all their appurtenances, in the townes and feilds in Burton Overy and Wigston, in the county of Leicestre aforesaid, which I lately purchased of Elizabeth Kent, widdow, for a yerely obit, to be kept in the same college, for my lord my ffadyr, my Lady my moder, my lord my husband, and for me for ever. Item, where I owe unto Cecilie marquese Dorset certain sumes of money, which I have borrowed of her at diverse times, as appeareth by bills indented thereof made; I woll that the said Cecilie, in full contentation of all such sumes of money as I owe unto her, have my bed of arres, (arras), tillor, testor, and counterpane, which she late borrowed of me; and over that I will that she have my tabulet (jewel) of gold that she now hath in her hands for a pledge, and three curtains of blew sarcionette (fine silk), and a traverse of blew sarcionette, and three quishions of counterfeit arres, with imagery of women, a long quishion, and two short, of blew velvet; also two carpets. Item, I bequeath to my son Edward lord Hastings a suite of

vestiments, now being in the hands of the abbot of Darley for a sume of twenty pounds, which suite I will be pledged oute of my proper goods; also an owche (jewel), being in the keeping of my son William; also an image of our Lady, now being in the hands of my lady marquesse. Item, a salt (cellar) of gold, now in the hands of my daughter Mary lady Hungerford (Edward's wife); alsoe a faire Prymar, which I had by the yefture (gift) of queen Elizabeth. Alsoe where my said son oweth unto me for certain charges which I took upon me for his sake an hundred markes, as appeareth by his writing thereof made, I, considering the kinde demeanor of my said son at this time in granting of a certain annuity, remit and pardon him unto the same hundred markes due to me by the bequest of William Strote, in part payment for my debts, and for my servants at the next audit. Alsoe, I bequeath unto my said son two coverings for quishions of counterfeit arres, with imagery of women. Item, two quishions of counterfeit arres with my lord's armes; alsoe two paire of curtaines of green tartarin. Item, two short quishions of tawney velvet; alsoe a long quishion, and short, of crimson velvet; alsoe such pieces of bawdekyn, with a frontail of cloth of gold of blew sattin, as hath been accustomed to be occupied about the sepulcre of our Lord, alsoe a cloth of bawdekyn, with a frontail of red bawdekyn for the font. Item, an old hanging of counterfeit arres of Knollys, which now hangeth in the hall; and all such hangynges of old bawdekyn or lynen paynted as now hang in the chappell, with the altar-clothes and oon super altare (cloth), with oon of the vestiments that now be occupyed in the chappell. Alsoe all such pieces of hangings as I have, of blew and better blew, with my lord's armes, with banquyrs and cupboard-clothes of the same sort. Alsoe three barrehides for carriage; and two barrehides for clothe sekks. Also, the third part of my hey that is at Kerby (Muxloe), and all such tymber as I have there. Also the bedding that he hath of mine which late was at London, reserved only two fedurbedds and a cowcher (couch) that I woll Richard my son have, and also two carpets. Item, I bequeath to my sons Richard and William four coverings for quishions with my lord's armys of counterfeit arres. Also two hangings for an aultar, with the twelve Apostles embrodered with gold, with a crucifix and the salutation of our Lady. Alsoe, all the pieces of hangings of verd (green) that now hang in my chamber and in the parlour; also all my stuffe of napree pertaining to the pantree; alsoe two pair of blankets, and two pair pf fustians; alsoe four pair of fine sheets; alsoe my stuff of kitchin, as platters, dishes, sawcers, broaches (spits), potts and pans; alsoe all my hey that is in Lubbesthorp, provided that William have the more part of the hey; alsoe two parts of the hey at Kerby; alsoe two vestiments, oon that hath been accustomed to be occupied in my high house, and oon that's occupyed in the chappell; two Masse-books, two super altars, oon of white to Richard, and oon of jett to William, two corporauxes; alsoe to Richard foure pair of brigaunters; and to William two payre; and to them both thirteen saletts. Item, to my son William all such stuffe of bedding as he now hath in his chamber of mine; that is to say, a seller, tester, and counterpoint of rosemary, a quilt happing (bedcover), a white mantel, a white square happing; a square happing, white and black. Alsoe to my sone William all such plate as was in the hands of John Holme, with that he pay unto the said John, at the feast of St Andrew next coming, fifteen pounds, in part payment of a greater sume; and over that doe such charitable deedes of almes as I have appointed to be done by him. Also I bequeathe to my son William four fedur beds and couchers; and to Richard two fedur bed that he hath, a coucher that was at London, a coucher that's here, and a fedur bedde. Item, I bequeath unto them all the hangings of saye (silk) which be at Kerbye now, as appeareth by the inventory thereof made, and I woll that William have foure pair of

sheets of such sorte as he now occupyeth. Item, to my lady Margaret (de Vere) a payre of little salts of silver and parcel gylt. To my sister (Alice) Fitz Hugh oon of my standing cupps; alsoe a bedd of tymbre; and such pledges as she hath of mine, I woll they be pledged out by William, and he to have them. Item, to my daughter Hungerford my part of a crosse, which she hath in her keeping for a pledge. Item, to my son (grandson) George Hastings a good fedur bedde, a boulster, a pair of blankets, a pair of fustians, and a pair of fine sheets. Item, to my daughter Anne Hastings a good fedurbedd, a boulster, a paire of blankets, a p[air of fustians and a payre of fine sheets. Item, to my nephew William Ferrers and to my niece his wife, a fedur bedd, a boulster, a blanket, a chike happing, an old counterpoint, sillor and testor, which they now occupy in their chamber; alsoe four payre of sheets, and oon of my finest gownes. Item, my lady Mary (Hungerford) a ring, which William Bamsell hath for a pledge, to be pledged out of my goods. Item, to my neece Brokesby, three payre of sheets, and oon of my best gownes: my gownes to be given among my other gentlewomen, and oon to Mrs. Booth, and oon to Margaret Cooke, and oon old gowne to moder Cecill of Leicestre, and oon gown cloth of my groome's livery to Johane Hudson, and oon gowne cloath of my growmy's (groom's) livery to Richard Twhytull. Item, to sir Christopher Hayward, my preest, in monie or stuff, whether he woll, ten marks, towards such chardges of reparations of his chauncell as he shall have. Item, I bequeath to the same sir Christopher Hayward a vestiment of crimson velvet, and the crosse of black cloth of gold. Item, I woll that he entre immediately after my departing into the ferme of Kerby appertaining unto him, and to take all such fruits as have growne this year, with tithes, oblations, and other profits belonging to the said ferme; and over that he is to perceive in money fifty-three shillings foure-pence, and to content himself for the rent of the said ferme for this year, and to pay unto the preest of Kerby his full wages unto the Annuntiation of our Lady next coming. Alsoe I woll that my household be fully contented and paid for their whole quarter's wages to be finished at Christmas next, and all such wages that has been unpaid due unto them; over this I woll that every oon of my gentlemen shall have thirteen shillings four pence (a mark); and every yeoman ten shillings; and every groom six shillings eight pence. Item, I woll that John Lolls have twenty pounds. Item, I bequeathe to Mr. Doctor Christopherson oon of my best horses, and also a gown of my fine black. Item, I woll that such hangings or bedding, as shall be sold for the payment of my debts and performance of my will, be refused of (offered to) my lady marquisse and of my son Edward lord Hastings before they be any parcel to be sold to any other body, so that the said lady marquiss and lord Hastings woll give as much for the said as any other woll doe, and make as quick payment. The residue of my goods not bequeathed, my debts fully paid, with all my cattall, somes of monie, rents, annuities, debts, and arrearages, which it shall happen to me to have and be possessed of, or due unto me, by any grant or lawfull meane, at the time of my departing, I woll be equally divided between my sons Richard and William. And for the true execution and performance of this my present testament and last will, I make and ordain Ceicill marquiss Dorset, widdow, George, earl of Shrewsbury and Anne his wife, my daughter, Edward lord Hastings, Richard Hastings, and William Hastings, esquires, my sons, myne executors; most humbly beseeching and praying them, in the way of charity, to take the peyne and labour for the true performance of the same, as myn special trust is in them.

Statement of Word Count

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