

**The Politics of Madness: Government in the Reigns of Charles
VI and Henry VI**

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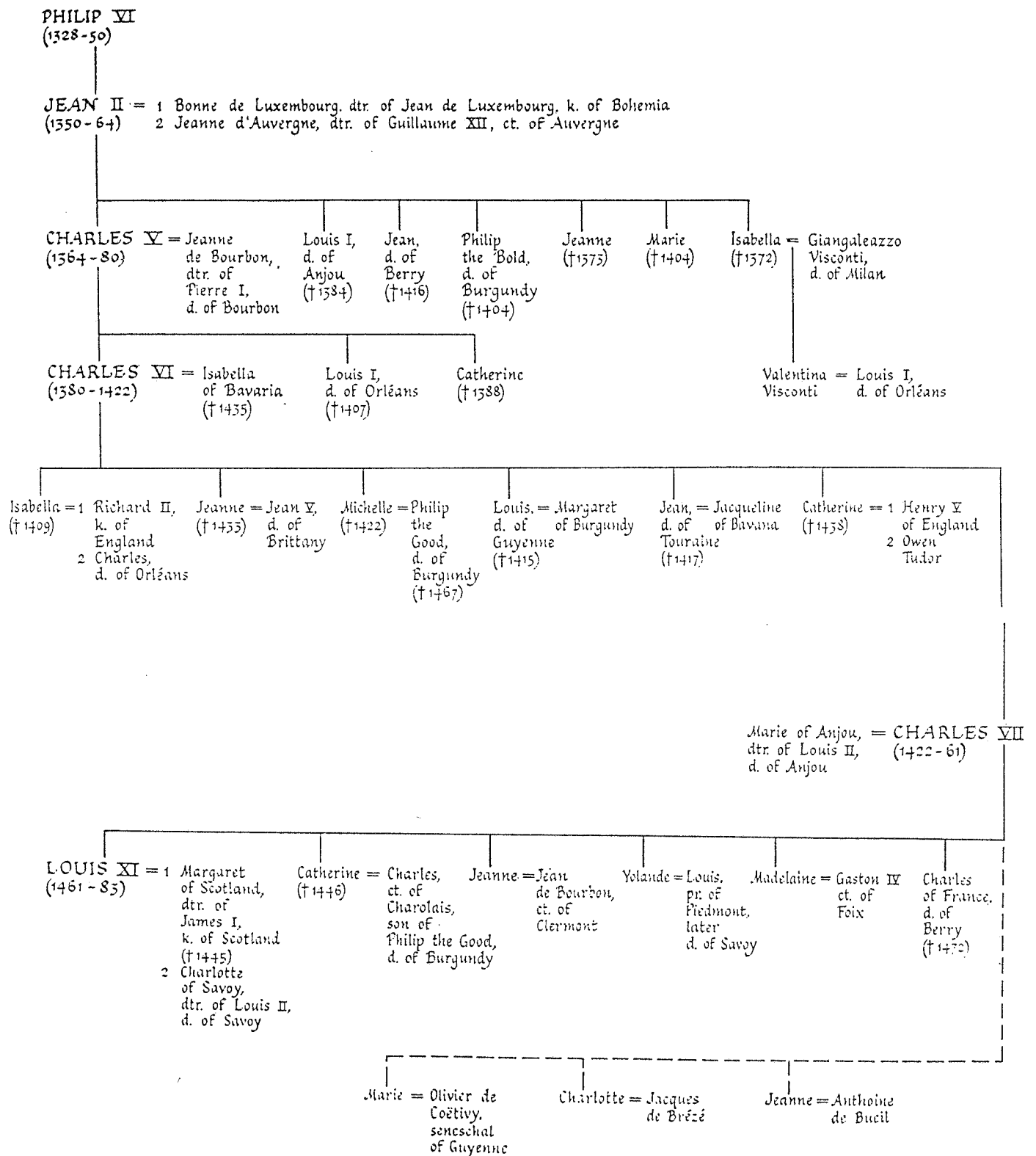


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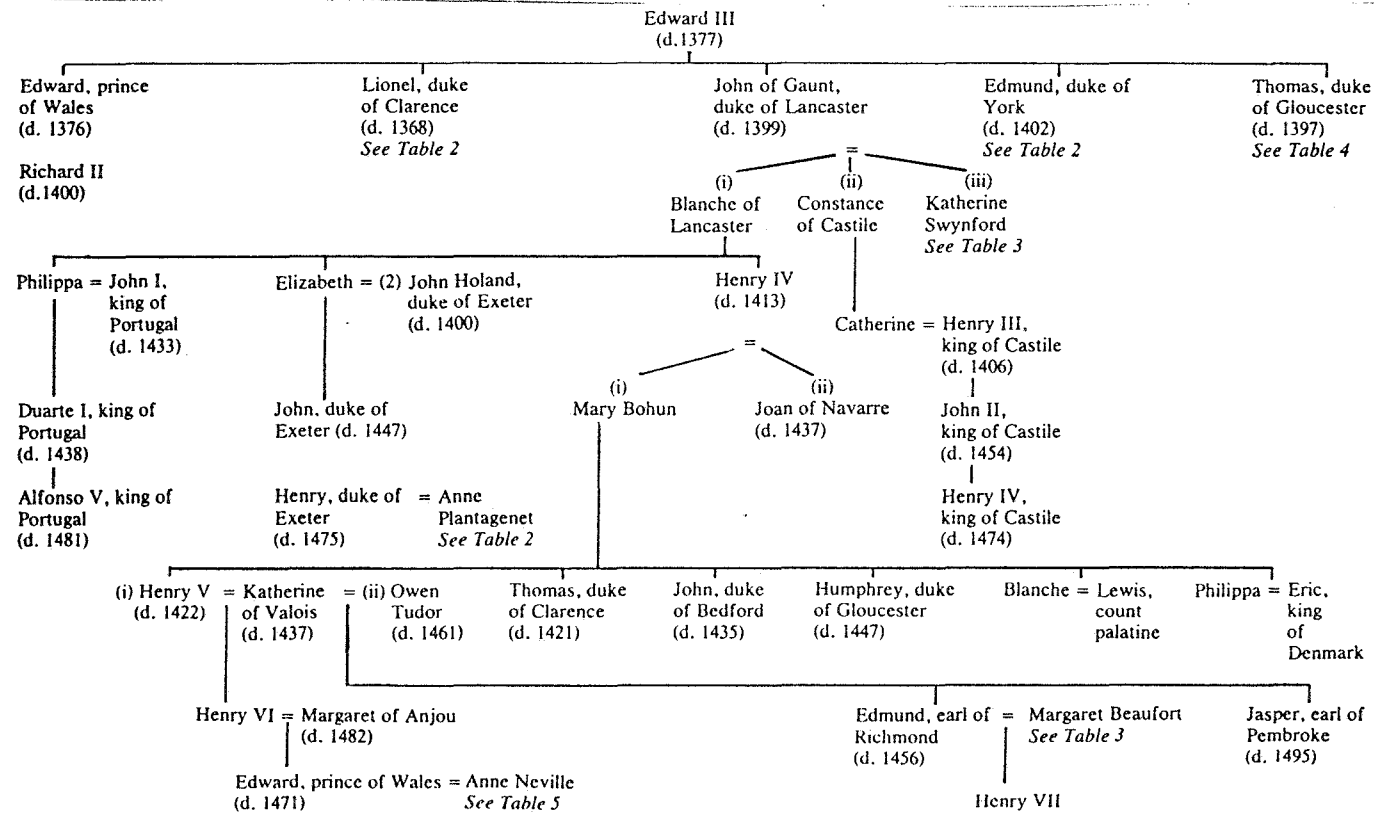


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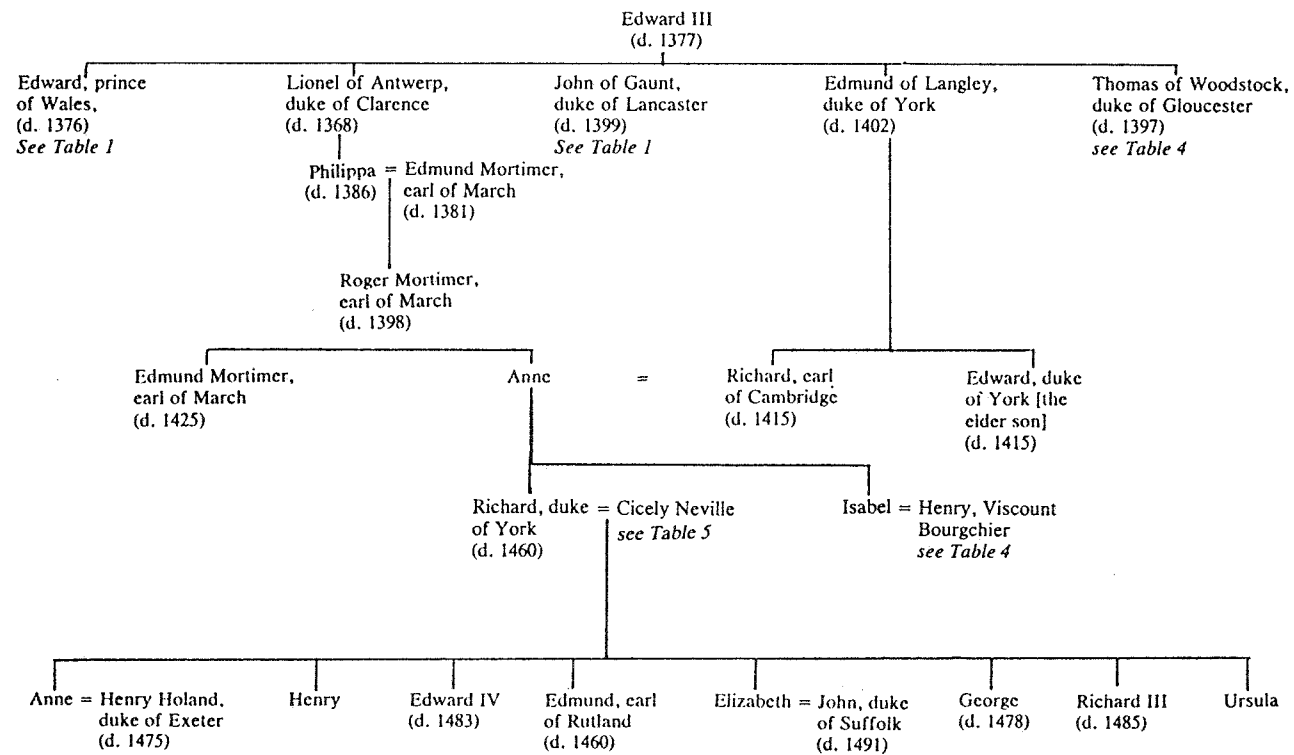
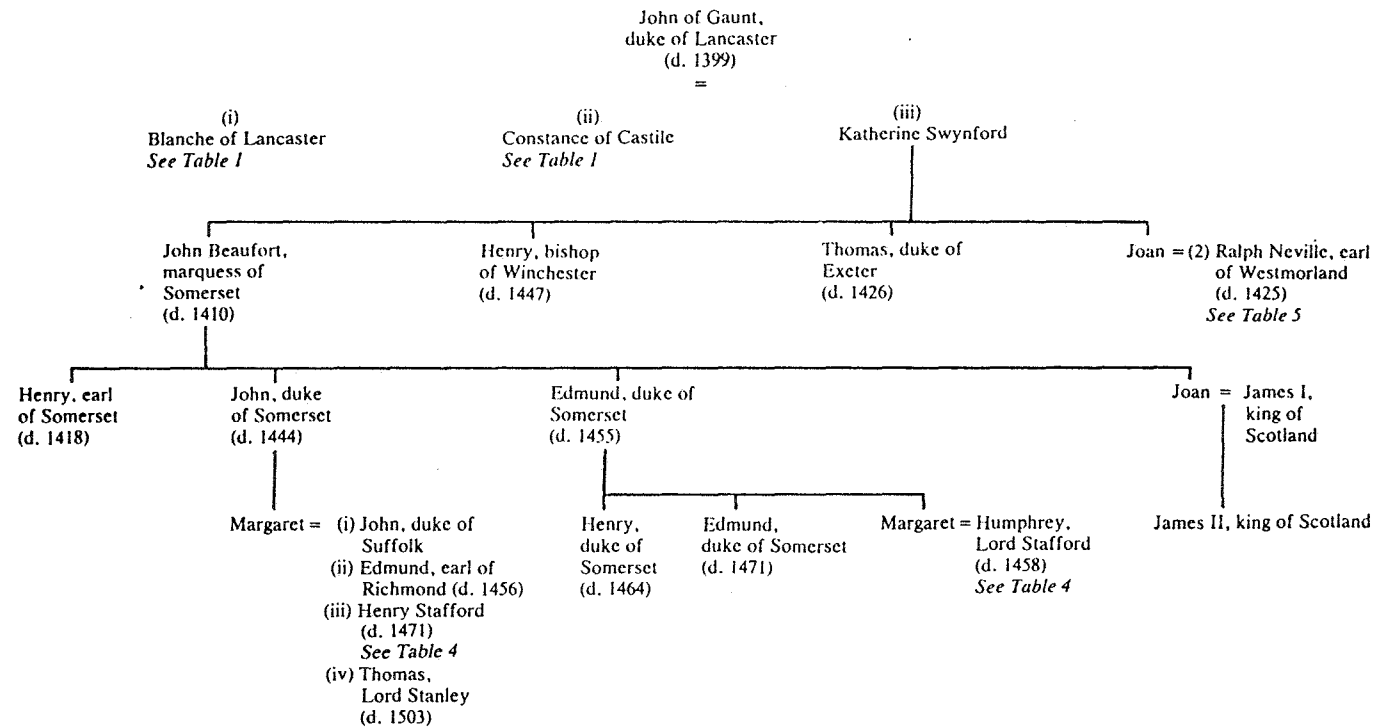
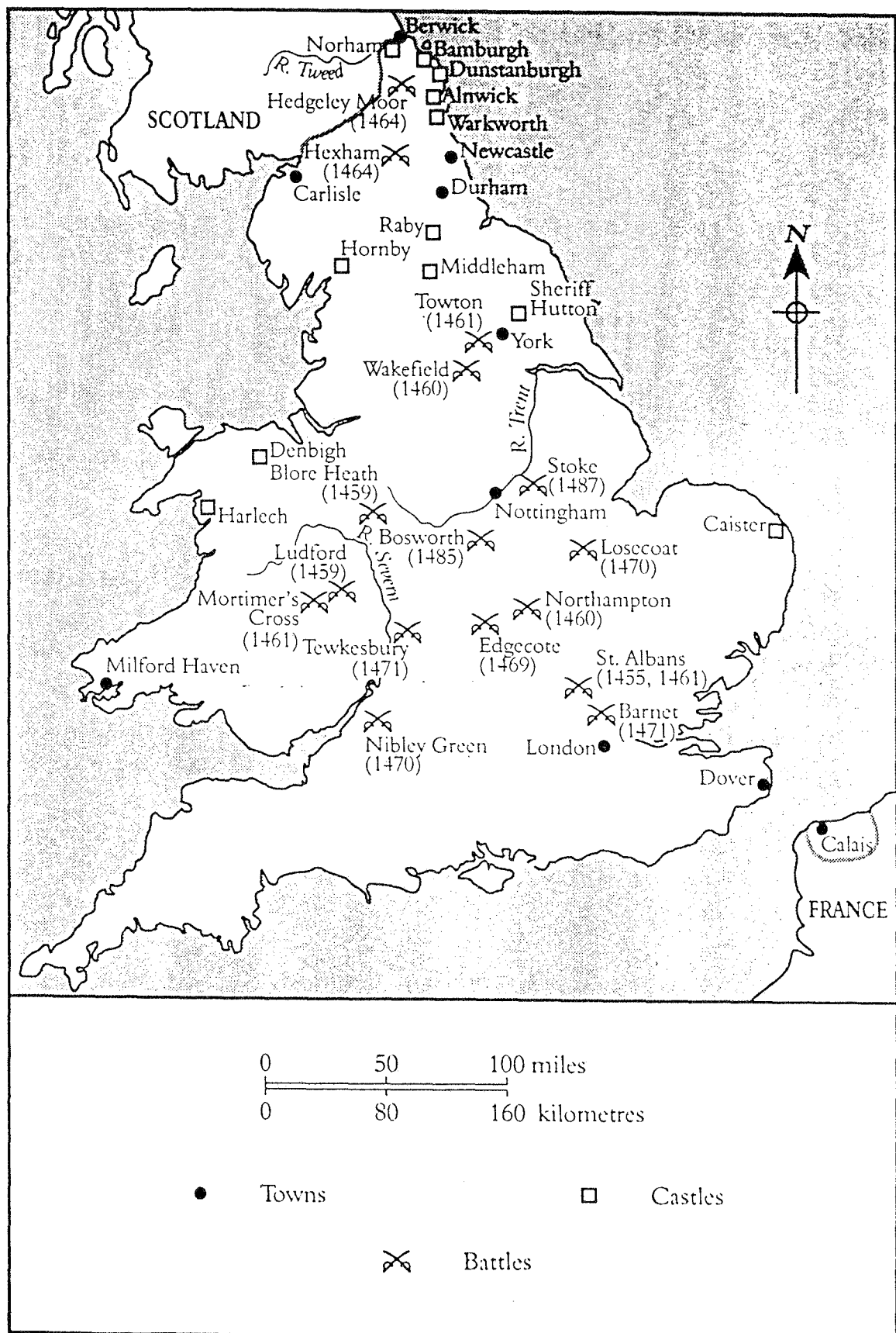


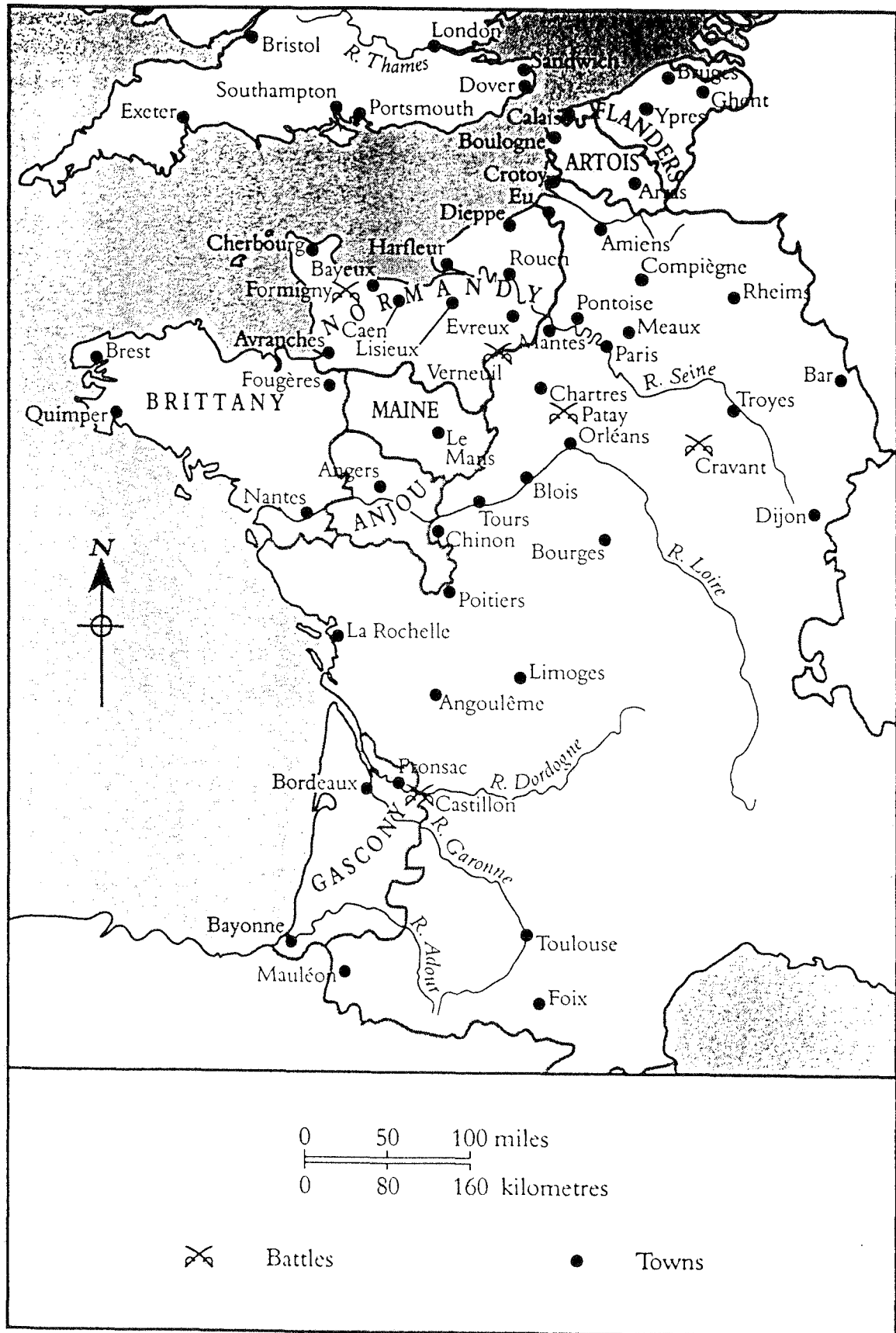
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Introduction

Introduction

Between 1380 and 1422, in the reign of the mad king Charles VI, France suffered rebellion and the civil wars of Armagnacs and Burgundians, quite apart from the disastrous depredations of the English from 1415 onwards. After 1422 England had a mad king too, Henry VI, founder of Eton College; she experienced her own civil wars, the Wars of the Roses, in the middle years of the fifteenth century.¹

Given Vaughan's assessment, can it be regarded coincidental that both France and England during these turbulent periods were ruled by mentally ill kings? Although Vaughan is implying that the mental illnesses of both monarchs and the troubles evident in their reigns are causally linked, much historical literature fails to adequately address this question.

Some historians have approached the illnesses of Charles VI and Henry VI from the standpoint of modern psychology, thereby attempting a diagnosis.² With regard to Charles VI, Famiglietti and Green have suggested that he was a schizophrenic.³ However Green does not elucidate further, whilst Famiglietti discusses Charles's illness as complying with the criteria for a paranoid schizophrenic in the, Diagnostic Statistical Manual-III (DSM-III). Concerning Henry VI's condition, Green has postulated that he suffered a manic depressive stupor. In a 1987 article, Rawcliffe suggested that Henry's might have had neurasthenia⁴, but by 1996 she had revised her diagnosis to one of

¹ R. Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy*, (London: 1975), p. 7.

² For explanations of the symptomatology of any illnesses below mentioned see, A.S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, (Harmondsworth: 1987).

³ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue, Crisis at the Court of Charles VI 1392-1420*, (New York: 1986), p.1-21 & V. Green, *The Madness of King's, Personal Trauma and the Fate of Nations*, (New York: 1993), p. 70-86.

⁴ C. Rawcliffe, 'Richard Duke of York, the King's "Obeisant Liegeman": A New Source for the Protectorate of 1454 and 1455', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 60, 1987, p. 232.

schizotypy.⁵ Additionally Wolffe, in his biography of Henry VI, suggested the possibility of a depressive stupor.⁶ Although this diagnosis is similar to Green's hypothesis, the extremities of behaviour that characterise a manic depressive stupor are largely absent in depressive stupors.⁷ Storey argues that Henry's condition is consistent with an episode of catatonic schizophrenia.⁸ Finally, Clarke maintains that Henry suffered from schizotypal personality disorder, a life long condition in which environmental factors are heavily implicated.⁹ Thus despite the applications of modern psychological principles, historians have failed to achieve a consensus regarding diagnoses for both kings.

This approach is further hampered by the continually changing nature of modern psychology. Due to alterations in the criteria used for diagnoses, terms and illnesses become obsolete, thus negating our previous theories. For instance, Rawcliffe's diagnosis of neurasthenia was almost obsolete in 1987. Subsequent developments in psychology forced a reappraisal, thus accounting for her 1996 diagnosis of schizotypy. Current advances see the classifying of schizophrenic related illnesses in terms of positive and negative symptoms¹⁰ and may therefore render obsolete other terms such as schizotypy or paranoid and catatonic schizophrenia.

Additionally, psychology relies on the observation of the patient for diagnostic purposes. Approximately five hundred years have elapsed since the reigns of Charles VI and Henry VI, thereby rendering direct observation impossible. The historian must rely

⁵ C. Rawcliffe, 'The Insanity of Henry VI', *The Historian*, no 50, 1996.

⁶ B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, (London: 1981), p. 271.

⁷ For the characteristics of depressive stupors see, D. Stafford-Clark & A.C. Smith, *Psychiatry for Students*, 6th ed., (London: 1983), p. 242-3.

⁸ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, (Gloucestershire: 1999), p. 136.

⁹ B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain: Exploratory Studies*, (Cardiff: 1975), p. 176-206.

on a combination of chronicle accounts and official documentation when examining the mental illnesses of Charles VI and Henry VI and many of these sources are of dubious veracity.¹¹

Few sources specifically recount the nature of Charles VI's illness. However, the *Chroniques du Religieux de Saint Denis* contains much useful information regarding the symptoms of Charles VI's episodes of illness. Indeed the author appears so well informed that it has been suggested that he was a royal secretary.¹² This chronicle is regarded as the official history of the reign of Charles VI and may therefore present a positive bias. Despite this, the author includes both praise and criticism of Charles VI. For instance, the Monk criticises many aspects of Charles VI's 'wilful' behaviour as a youth. He also details some of the worst aspects of Charles' behaviour during his episodes of mental illness.¹³ However the Monk's decreasing interest in the symptoms of later episodes, gives us an incomplete picture. Nonetheless, this still remains the most valuable account of the trajectory of Charles VI's illness.

Juvenal des Ursins', *Histoire de Charles VI*, relies heavily on the Monk of Saint Denis and also includes alleged eyewitness material from his father, Jean Juvenal, who was the chancellor of the Duke of Guyenne. For example, Juvenal des Ursins, states that during an episode of illness in 1405, Charles VI was responsive only towards Jean Juvenal. This evidence is unsubstantiated and therefore it must be noted that a desire to appear more important in the sequence of events than actually was the case, may be the

¹⁰ For information regarding positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia see, G.C. Davison & J.M. Neale, *Abnormal Psychology*, 7th ed., (New York: 1998), p. 264-269.

¹¹ Only major sources concerning the mental illnesses of Charles VI and Henry VI will be discussed.

impetus behind such examples. This possible lack of objectivity could conceivably discredit Juvenal des Ursins account of the mental illness of Charles VI.

The chronicler Froissart also takes interest in the mental illness of Charles VI. Famiglietti states that Froissart was present at Abbeville in 1393 when Charles' second episode of mental illness occurred.¹⁴ Despite Froissart's claims that the king's condition was kept secret for as lengthy a period as possible, he seems remarkably ill-informed for an eye-witness. Indeed Froissart provides no valuable information concerning the symptomatology or the trajectory of Charles' illness, beyond the sensational first episode. Rather the narrative appears to be punctuated by Charles' episodes of mental illness. However the main problem with Froissart is stylistic, as Archambault elucidates, "One perceives a series of instants, never time; a series of objects, never dynamic subjects; repetitive actions and events, never organic presentation."¹⁵

Monstrelet, whose chronicle was an attempted continuation of Froissart, enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of Burgundy and therefore, "He was naturally on the side of Burgundy, of that there can be no doubt, but whenever he had to deal with a difficult situation he was careful not to say too much. If necessary, rather than say too much, he preferred to say nothing at all."¹⁶ However Monstrelet demonstrates a level of impartiality that is surprising for someone so openly allied with the Burgundians. For

¹² A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, (New York: 1974), p. 190.

¹³ See Chapter One: The Problems of Personality.

¹⁴ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 4.

¹⁵ P. Archambault, *Seven French Chroniclers, Witnesses to History*, (New York: 1974), p. 70.

¹⁶ J. Calmette, *The Golden Age of Burgundy, The Magnificent Dukes and their Courts*, D. Weightman tr., (London: 1962), p. 192.

instance, after the assassination of Louis of Orléans in 1407, Monstrelet gives equal attention to Burgundy's justification and the Orléanists' refutation.¹⁷

The anonymous author, and Burgundian partisan, of the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, did not demonstrate the objectivity of Monstrelet. However this author rarely mentions the king's illness beyond a superficial acknowledgment of the event. The author gives the impression of being accurate but his pre-occupation with events in Paris and his bias toward Burgundy consume the narrative, "This book is in no sense an official record; it is one man's impression of people and events. It is an invaluable social and economic document and a fascinating human one."¹⁸ Thus this document is of little import for the historian attempting to investigate the mental illness of Charles VI.

A similar pattern emerges in the sources concerning Henry VI's mental illness. The Abbot Wethamsted, who may have personally witnessed Henry's condition, sympathised with the House of York.¹⁹ Nonetheless, his is a balanced account as is evident with his criticisms of York over his feud with Somerset, and for his aspirations concerning the crown in 1460.²⁰ Thus Wethamsted's potential bias is tempered by his moralistic outlook. Furthermore, if he was privy to Henry's condition during his prolonged episode of mental illness, this source becomes extremely valuable. Furthermore, Wethamsted's comments regarding Henry's condition are substantiated by

¹⁷ E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, p. 61-81 & 89-115 respectively.

¹⁸ J. Shirley (ed), Introduction in, *A Parisian Journal 1405-1449, translated from the anonymous Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, (Oxford: 1968), p. 2.

¹⁹ See, B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 178.

²⁰ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 382.

official documentation in the Rolls of Parliament, thus further emphasising the potential accuracy and usefulness of Wethamsted's narrative.²¹

Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland is also an important source, particularly relating to its appearance of impartiality. Williams explains,

The ulterior purpose of the chronicles - as a vehicle for the claims of the monastery - strongly suggests that the compiler had no reason for censoring or distorting the historical texts he makes use of as Markham and others postulate. Any distortion is capricious and inherent in the way he uses the historical material for a monastic purpose.²²

Thus although care must be taken to identify these instances, with regard to Henry VI's illness, this source is valuable due to its seeming lack of political bias.

The Paston Letters are another source that has no discernible reason to deliberately distort historical realities. Nonetheless being a collection of personal letters, it must be noted that it merely reflects the opinions of those constructing these letters. As a result the bias of the writers may be infused in the letters. McFarlane states that the main problem with this collection and others like it is that,

...they have suggested the consoling but possibly mistaken notion that while the great lords were busy exterminating one another, lesser men, though enduring much at the hands of their betters, stood to some extent outside and below the conflict so that, unlike their betters they were able to survive.²³

Nonetheless, the letters concerning Henry's illness are substantiated by official documentation and chronicle evidence, thereby rendering this collection of private correspondence highly valuable to the historian.

²¹ See Chapter One: The Problems of Personality.

²² D. Williams, 'The Crowland Chronicle, 616-1500', in D. Williams (ed), *England in the Fifteenth Century*, (Suffolk: 1987), p. 378.

²³ K.B. McFarlane, 'The Wars of the Roses', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 50, 1964, p. 88.

The Blacman biography is a particularly important source of information regarding Henry's personality, although its historical worth has been considered to be limited. This source is deemed contentious by many historians due to its self-conscious portrayal of the king as a candidate for sainthood. Nonetheless, Lovatt's observations demonstrate that despite Blacman's singularity, the source may indeed be a valuable account of Henry's personality,²⁴

Reluctant to participate in hunting or banquets, Blacman's king is remote and self-absorbed, not conversing easily with his entourage or readily sharing their mundane concerns. It is a detached otherworldliness which, as Blacman himself hinted, could readily lapse into the withdrawal and mental prostration which were the main symptoms of Henry's periods of insanity.²⁵

Therefore, it is possible that Blacman emphasises Henry's piety to disguise his periods of mental illness, something which would be entirely in keeping with his agenda of Henry's canonisation.²⁶ However despite Blacman's obvious place in Tudor propaganda, the gulf between fiction and reality may not be as large as initially assumed by historians.

Finally, other Tudor historians or propagandists such as Fabyan²⁷, Hall²⁸, Vergil²⁹ and Shakespeare³⁰, 'gloss over' Henry's episode of mental illness. With regard to Shakespeare, his agenda is one of literary enjoyment and entertainment, rather than history; as Norwich states, "To him [Shakespeare] the cause of drama was of infinitely

²⁴ R. Lovatt, 'John Blacman: Biographer of Henry VI', in R.H.C. Davis & J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (eds), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: essays presented to R.W. Southern*, (Oxford: 1981), p. 444.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

²⁶ For the role of the Blacman biography in the Cult of Henry VI see, J.W. McKenna, 'Piety and Propaganda: The Cult of King Henry VI', in B. Rowland (ed), *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of R.H. Robbins*, (London: 1974), p. 72-88. For more information concerning Henry as a saint see, B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 151-175 & B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, p. 3-21.

²⁷ See, R. Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, H. Ellis (ed), (London: 1811).

²⁸ See, E. Hall, *Hall's Chronicle: containing the history of England, during the reigns of Henry the Fourth, and the succeeding monarchs, to the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth*, (London: 1809).

²⁹ See P. Vergil, *Polydore Vergil's English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III*, H. Ellis (ed), Camden Society Old Series, (London: 1844).

greater importance than the slavish observance of historical truth.”³¹ The other aforementioned authors may also have felt uneasy detailing the mental illness of Henry VI, as the Tudors claimed to be heirs to the House of Lancaster. Thus rather than suggest that Tudor ancestry was tainted with the stigma of mental illness, they preferred to entirely overlook Henry VI’s mental illness.

Therefore the quality of the sources prevents an adequate examination of the symptomatology and trajectory of Charles VI and Henry VI’s mental illnesses. However it also hampers any historian’s attempt to discern the events of their respective reigns. But if previous approaches are flawed, of what import is the examination of a monarch’s mental illness? The answer is to elucidate the effects that these mentally ill monarchs had on the political stability of their realms and to highlight the inadequacies of a medieval system unable to cope with these events.

The mental illness of a king was a new and unprecedented phenomenon in late Medieval French and English politics. The mental illnesses of Charles VI and Henry VI therefore created the dilemma of how to secure political stability in a system that above all required the king’s presence. This form of analysis requires a discussion of the personality of both monarchs’ and the nature of their illnesses. Importantly, this highlights the periods when the mental illnesses impacted on the political atmosphere and aids in the comparison of these periods of illness with times of perceived lucidity. Furthermore it requires an evaluation of the nature of the environmental stresses, particularly regarding expectations of kingship. Firstly, because this environment is

³⁰ See, W. Shakespeare, Henry VI Parts One, Two and Three, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, (Hertfordshire: 1999).

particular to both Charles and Henry it may therefore have impacted on their already unstable or weak personalities. Secondly, the nexus of the stresses of kingship, mental illness and personality may reveal the ramifications for the struggle to preserve political stability in the event of the king's absence. Thus this approach may serve to reveal the effect that these turbulent personalities had on the nations that they ruled.

³¹ J.J. Norwich, *Shakespeare's Kings*, (London: 2000), p. 5.

Chapter One:
The Problems of Personality

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The personality of the ruler still remains one of the most important influences in history. '*Le plus importante ressource de la royauté,*' as the French historian Charles Petit-Dutaillis observed, '*c'est le génie personnel du roi.*' ('The most important of the resources of the monarchy is the personal ability of the king.')

³²

The identification of a medieval king's personality is a difficult task given the temporal distance, cultural relativities, lack of substantive sources and the pervasiveness of mental illness. Regarding sovereigns such as Charles VI and Henry VI, there is a temptation to view all their actions, even in periods of lucidity, as manifestations of an aberrant personality; thus any good policies enacted in their reigns are seen to be prompted either by advisers or are merely as a result of chance. As previously highlighted, the sources available are often infused with authorial agendas, political persuasions and the benefit of hindsight.³³ Thus the personalities of these medieval kings, insofar as they may be identified, are based on varying and often biased opinions with sources unable to provide an objective picture of monarchical personalities. Nonetheless, the personalities of these kings, insofar as they may be identified, requires assessment if the impact of their behaviours on any sector of society is to be examined, for as Wolffe states, "On the personality of the king depended the tone and quality of the life of the nation."³⁴

³² V. Green, *The Madness of Kings: Personal Trauma and the Fate of Nations*, (New York: 1993), p. 16.

³³ Such topics have been discussed in the introduction, (see above).

³⁴ B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, (London: 1981), p. 26.

The Personality of Charles VI

In discussing the personality of Charles VI prior to 1392, it should be noted that as a minor his personality would have had little impact on government functions as his involvement in politics during this time would have been largely ceremonial. Furthermore, Charles enjoyed only four years of personal rule prior to the onset of his illness and therefore it is difficult to discern the impact of his premorbid personality on the functioning of government.

Froissart's chronicle does not offer a character assessment of Charles VI; rather he provides insights into the potential difficulties which may arise from a monarch's weak character. Froissart cites the dying words of Charles V as, "My whole confidence rests in you: the child is young, and, being of an unsteady temper, will want to be well managed and properly instructed in sound learning."³⁵ Here Froissart has clearly stated that the guardians of the young king had been warned and that the events of 1392 and beyond were preventable, had the old king's words been heeded.

Contrary to the dying king's view of Charles VI as being 'of an unsteady temper', Monstrelet, whose chronicle was an attempted continuation of Froissart's work, praised the young Charles VI. Monstrelet comments that Charles began his reign as a prudent young man who was willing to follow the advice of his councillors and was quick to establish military aptitude in Flanders, thereby earning him an impressive reputation, "All

³⁵ J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 1, p. 616.

which enterprises made him redoubted in every part of the world that heard of him.”³⁶

However, Monstrelet is alone in his unabated praise of Charles as a virtuous character.

The account of the Monk of Saint-Denis is a more balanced portrayal citing both Charles’ strengths and weaknesses. According to the Monk, Charles was interested in sport and was considerably skilled in this area and had a tendency to bear a grudge but was not antisocial; rather he was affable and generous, even towards those whom the Monk describes as “contemptible”. Conversely the Monk highlights a number of the monarch’s faults, such as,

...carnal lust, dislike of wearing the official royal costume, the habit of dressing up as a Bohemian or a German, and his breaking with royal tradition by continuing to participate in military games and jousts after having received Holy Unction at his coronation.³⁷

Like the Monk of Saint Denis, Juvenal des Ursins also recounts Charles’ fondness for violent pursuits,

...his father, Charles V, showed him a rich crown and a helmet and asked him in front of their dinner guests whether he would prefer to be crowned king or have the helmet and be subject to the perils and fortunes of war. Charles chose the helmet.³⁸

Despite these faults, neither the Monk’s account, nor Jean Juvenal des Ursins’ *Histoire de Charles VI*, reveal any aberrant behaviour that could be linked at this stage to mental instability; nor is there any suggestion that the events of 1392 could have been foreseen. As Famiglietti adds, although some of King Charles’ behaviour was unconventional, he was not considered abnormal during his youth. Only Froissart suggests that the onset of Charles’ mental illness can be identified in this premorbid phase. Had Charles

³⁶ E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, tr. T. Johnes esq. (London: 1840), p. 2.

³⁷ The Monk of Saint Denis as quoted by, R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 13-14.

³⁸ Jean Juvenal des Ursins as quoted by, R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 13.

demonstrated any mental instability or behavioural oddities, one would expect some record to this effect, particularly by the Monk who openly details Charles' character faults. Even the recurring theme of the monarch's love of violent pursuits must be viewed within the context of Medieval society in which violence and warfare were integral to aristocratic cultural discourses.³⁹ Therefore in the context of late fourteenth century society, Charles appears to be a 'normal' youth who exhibited no symptoms of mental illness

In 1392 however, Charles's mental illness became a reality and France reeled from its sudden and unexpected onset. Tuchman states, "History never more cruelly demonstrated the vulnerability of a nation to the person of its chief of state than in the affliction of France beginning in 1392."⁴⁰ According to Froissart, during the Easter of 1392 Charles developed a fever. He had barely recovered before a dispute arose between the crown and the Duke of Brittany. Despite the objections of his uncles and advisers, the king insisted on a military expedition against Brittany.⁴¹ During the period prior to embarking on the expedition, Charles began to exhibit unusual behaviours,

the king, during his stay at Mans, laboured hard and assiduously in the council, where he had but little assistance, and was besides not perfectly recovered in health. He had been the whole summer feeble in body and mind, scarcely eating or drinking any thing, and almost daily was attacked with fever, to which he was naturally inclined, and this was increased by any contradiction or fatigue.⁴²

Although displaying signs of over-work and self neglect, none suspected that Charles was beginning to exhibit signs of mental instability.

³⁹ Concerning the cultural context of aristocratic violence see, M. Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men at Arms*, (London: 1996).

⁴⁰ B.W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*, (New York: 1979), p. 494.

⁴¹ J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 2, p. 520-21 & 532.

Having embarked on the military expedition to Brittany, Charles was confronted by what the Monk of Saint-Denis described as a 'madman'.⁴³ The madman warned Charles not to proceed with the expedition as certain betrayal would ensue. The Monk states that, "L'imagination du roi, déjà troublée, lui fit ajouter foi à ces paroles, et un nouvel incident acheva d'égarer ses esprits."⁴⁴ This 'nouvel incident', being the exhibition of a frenzied behaviour by Charles, was produced by a sudden sound issuing from a page's sword falling onto the helmet of another in the king's retinue. In his already agitated state, Charles declared that all around him were traitors and killed four people in the ensuing melee before being restrained by his officers. According to the Monk, after this incident Charles remained in a state of unconsciousness, his pulse was weak and his body cold, he lost all sensation in his limbs and the power of speech deserted him for two days, and finally, he was unable to recognise anyone, including his brother and his uncles.⁴⁵

The cause of this incident provoked much discussion. Initially the king's uncles ascribed it to bewitchment or poison. This belief persisted until the King's physicians announced that Charles had been suffering from a disorder for some years as a result of his weakness of intellect.⁴⁶ A similar sentiment was shared by the eminent physician, William de Harseley, who later restored the king to health. He suggested that the illness was due to the environmental precipitants immediate to the onset of the frenzy. These

⁴² Ibid., p. 533.

⁴³ M.L. Bellaguet, (ed), *Chroniques du Religieux de Saint-Denis: contenant la Règne de Charles VI de 1380 à 1422*, vols 1-6, (Paris: 1994), p. 19.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 21-22. See also Jean Juvenal des Ursins, *Histoire de Charles VI Roy de France et des choses memorables aduenues durant 42 annees de fon Regne, duepis 1380. jusques a 1422*, (Paris: 1653), p. 91-93, E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, p. 3-4 & J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 2, p. 532-536.

precipitants included the confrontation with the 'madman' and the shock of the loud noise emanating from the falling sword. These events combined to convince the King that there were indeed traitors in his midst and resulted in his frenzied behaviour.

Pope Boniface XII however, was convinced that God had deprived the king of his sanity due to his support for the Avignon anti-pope, Clement VII. Conversely it is not surprising, that the 'anti-pope' suggested that God was punishing Charles for not acting on his oath to destroy the Roman papacy. Clement VII also suggested,

...that the king was young and wilful, and had, by his own fault, brought on him this disorder; that those about his person had allowed him to act too much as he pleased; and that he had exerted himself in different excesses, and by riding post night and day, and had laboured unreasonably, in mind and body, on matters that should have been done by his ministers and not by himself; and that if he had been properly and soberly educated by the advice of his uncles, this unfortunate illness would never have happened.⁴⁷

Therefore the proposed aetiology ascribed to Charles' illness was based on varying medical opinions,⁴⁸ superstitions as well as political and religious agendas.

Although Charles recovered from this episode, he was to suffer from intermittent episodes of mental illness throughout his life. From 1397 onwards Charles episodes of mental illness became more frequent but of a shorter duration, although all were severely physically and mentally disabling.⁴⁹ According to the available records, it is evident that Charles suffered at least four major episodes of mental illness. However the first episode,

⁴⁶ J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 2, p. 535.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

⁴⁸ For more concerning Medieval understandings of mental illness see, P.B.R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children, Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature*, (London: 1974), p. 1-53; E.R. Harvey, *The Inward Wits, Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, (London: 1975), S. Kemp & G.J.O. Fletcher, 'The Medieval Theory of the Inner Senses' *American Journal of Psychology*, vol 106, no 4, 1993, C. Rawcliffe, *Sources for the History of Medicine in Late Medieval England*, (Kalamazoo: 1995), p. 82-89, C. Rawcliffe, 'The Insanity of Henry VI', *The Historian*, 50, 1996 & J.M. Schneck, *A History of Psychiatry*, (Illinois: 1960), p. 29-33.

⁴⁹ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 5.

as described above, was singular in its nature, in that no other episode began so quickly or so violently.

The second episode began in June 1393. The Monk suggests that Charles began exhibiting, “extravagances tout-à-fait indignes de la majesté royale,”⁵⁰ but he does not extrapolate further. The Monk relates other symptoms, such as the King’s lack of self recognition, insisting that he was not King Charles VI, and his inability or unwillingness to recognise his wife, Isabeau of Bavaria, to whom he was persistently hostile. He declined to have her in his presence and vandalised her coat of arms. According to the Monk, the only person Charles appeared to trust was his sister-in-law, Valentina Visconti, Duchess of Orléans. Ironically, she would later be accused of using witchcraft to induce the King’s condition.⁵¹ Jealousy may have motivated these accusations or they may be viewed as a ploy to discredit the House of Orléans.⁵² Nonetheless, this episode lasted for seven months although punctuated by short periods, during which Charles seemed relatively lucid.

The third episode began in 1395.⁵³ According to the Monk of Saint Denis, the king quite unexpectedly developed a dislike of his physician Freron, whom he subsequently exiled from Paris.⁵⁴ During this episode, Charles failed to recognise his family, yet was able to recognise all the members of the household, claimed his name was ‘George’ and continued to vandalise Isabeau’s coats of arms. Additionally, he attacked

⁵⁰ “Behaviour absolutely unworthy of the majesty of the king.” M.L. Bellaguet (ed), *Chroniques du Religieux de Saint-Denis*, p. 87.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 87-95.

⁵² These allegations did not result in any attempts to prosecute the Duchess of Orléans. See, J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 2, p. 633-634. This case also has an interesting parallel with that of the Duchess of Gloucester. See Chapter Two.

⁵³ For a debate on the precise date of onset see, R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 4-5.

⁵⁴ M.L. Bellaguet, *Chroniques du Religieux de Saint-Denis*, p. 405.

his own coats of arms, reputedly performing an 'undignified' dance while doing so. Charles was also seen running throughout the Hôtel Saint-Pol until he was exhausted, all the while claiming that his enemies were pursuing him. Again, as in the second episode, Charles had periods of relative lucidity during which he was able to attend to governmental business.⁵⁵

Charles' final major episode took place in 1397, but again there is little recorded detail of his behavioural manifestations. The Monk of Saint-Denis relates that the symptoms varied little from the previous episode and Juvenal des Ursins fails to rate this episode a mention. Nevertheless, although little detailed information is available, this episode should be viewed as significant due to its longevity - lasting from January to June 1397.⁵⁶

From 1397 onwards, Charles experienced many minor episodes about which there is limited evidence. There is however, some evidence of peculiar behaviour occurring during a minor episode late in 1397 during which Charles requested all knives to be removed from himself and his courtiers. On another occasion fearing that he was bewitched, he begged that those responsible for causing his condition to let him die.⁵⁷

An episode in 1405, saw Charles severely neglect his personal hygiene, refusing to have his bed linen changed or to eat and sleep at regular hours. According to the Monk this state persisted for six months before the king was coerced into modifying this behaviour.⁵⁸ Juvenal des Ursins does not ascribe a specific time frame for this incident.

⁵⁵ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 4-5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 5-6.

⁵⁸ Some of Charles' servants disguised themselves and frightened Charles into submission. See R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 7.

He adds the king was only responsive to the Duke of Guyenne's chancellor, who was, coincidentally Juvenal des Ursins' father.⁵⁹ Along with these symptoms there is evidence to suggest Charles experienced hallucinations, believing himself to be made of glass and/or that a thousand lead needles were pricking him.⁶⁰ Finally, accounts from the royal household tell of the king tearing clothing, throwing the apparel into the fire with other objects and urinating on a *houppelande*.⁶¹

Charles VI's episodes of mental illness occurred frequently the results of which were disruptive, both for himself and the kingdom. However between these episodes his contemporaries viewed him as sane, as is evidenced by a lack of resistance to his resumption of governmental duties. This possibly demonstrates Medieval misunderstandings of mental illness as it would be unusual if these frequent psychotic episodes did not produce some deterioration of Charles' overall mental functioning. Monstrelet is however, the only chronicler to suggest that Charles did not recover totally from his first episode, "nevertheless, by the grace of God, he recovered his health, and his senses, but not as soundly as he possessed them before this accident."⁶²

The Personality of Henry VI

As with Charles VI, consideration of Henry VI's premorbid personality requires assessment if his mental illness in later life is to be understood. Unfortunately, little is known of Henry's childhood and adolescence. At an early age he demonstrated a

⁵⁹ Jean Juvenal des Ursins, *Histoire de Charles VI*, p. 177.

⁶⁰ M. Camille, *Master of Death. The Lifeless Art of Pierre Remiet, Illuminator*, (New Haven: 1996), p. 151-152.

⁶¹ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 7.

⁶² E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, p. 4.

tendency to be influenced by 'unsuitable' people and to be wilful; Consequently the Earl of Warwick in 1432, requested that,

[Since the king] has been distracted by some from his learning, and spoken to about unsuitable matters, the earl, fearing the harm that may befall the king if such contacts be allowed, desires that, in all conversation men may have with the king, he [or his assignees] be present and privy to it.⁶³

This request was subsequently granted by the minority council.

Pierro da Monte the Italian humanist, describes Henry as principally concerned with his own chastity and virtue,

[Henry VI at the age of sixteen] avoided the sight and conversation of women affirming these to be the work of the devil . . . Those who knew him intimately said that he had preserved his virginity of mind and body to this present time, and that he was firmly resolved to have intercourse with no woman unless within the bonds of matrimony.⁶⁴

This is supported by Blacman who suggests that the King was chaste before his marriage and in marriage had limited sexual relations with his wife Margaret of Anjou. Henry even sought to protect the virtue of his servants, reputedly spying on them.⁶⁵

The central theme of Blacman's account of Henry's personality is piety. He demonstrates that Henry "was continually occupied either in prayer or the reading of Scriptures or of chronicles, whence he drew not a few wise utterances to the spiritual comfort of himself and others."⁶⁶ Moreover, Henry is shown to wear a hair shirt during principal feasts, that he kept the Sabbath, venerated Christian symbols and demonstrated small concern for material wealth.⁶⁷ Indeed, Blacman is concerned with the

⁶³ *The Paston Letters*, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Pierro da Monte, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 4.

⁶⁵ J. Blacman, *Henry the Sixth*, p. 29-30.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.

transformation of Henry's deficiencies as a ruler, into private virtues. Accordingly Henry becomes,

...like a second Job, a man simple and upright, altogether fearing God and eschewing evil. He was a simple man, without craftiness or untruth, as is plain to all. With none did he deal craftily, nor ever would say an untrue word to any, but framed his speech always to speak the truth.⁶⁸

Throughout his life, Henry was considered mentally simple. However the word 'simple', in a fifteenth century context, did not always mean mentally deficient.⁶⁹ For instance, Blacman uses 'simple' to denote a man without cunning or guile. However, many other sources use the term to suggest that Henry's mental capacity was impaired. For example, Jean de Waurin cites a proverb to illustrate his point regarding Henry's simple personality, "Very afflicted is the land whose prince is a child or rules like one."⁷⁰ Moreover, numerous remarks abounded between 1442 and 1450, suggesting that Henry had a childlike appearance or that he was a fool or a lunatic. One famous remark in point, was made by Carver⁷¹ who in 1444 stated that "if Henry were a man like the dauphin, he would be keeping his French possessions."⁷² Another remark supposedly attributable to two Sussex husbandmen in 1450, was,

...that the king was a natural fool and would often hold a staff in his hands with a bird on the end, playing therewith as a fool, and that another king must be ordained to rule the land, saying that the king was no person able to rule the land.⁷³

Although these comments are incapable of substantiation, they cannot be discarded. Indeed, as Storey suggests, "The impersonal administrative records of Henry's

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶⁹ See A. Weir, *Lancaster and York, The Wars of the Roses*, (London: 1998), p. 91 & A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, Appendix G, p. 497-498.

⁷⁰ Jean de Waurin, as cited in, K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 4.

⁷¹ For more regarding the Carver case see, C.A. Meekings, 'Thomas Kerver's Case, 1444', *English Historical Review*, 90, 1975, p. 331-346.

government naturally offer no positive evidence to confirm these rumours, but they are equally incapable of being cited to reject them.”⁷⁴ Furthermore these comments may serve to illustrate a certain lack of confidence in Henry’s mental capacity to rule, held by the general populace.⁷⁵

In 1453 the general populace’s fears were confirmed as Henry VI experienced a breakdown. This manifested in a stuporous condition and subsequently lasted for eighteen months. Throughout the historical literature of this period, Henry’s condition has been couched in terms of mental illness. For instance, the *Chronicon Angliæ* and *Bale’s Chronicle* described the illness as a loss of reason, wit, sense or intelligence.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, this mental disorder was accompanied by physical symptoms which are reported by a number of Henry’s contemporaries.⁷⁷ According to the Abbot Wethamsted, whom Clarke suggests possibly witnessed Henry’s condition,⁷⁸

A disease and disorder of some sort overcame the king [in 1453] that he completely lost his wits and memory for a time, and nearly all his body was so uncoordinated and out of control that he could neither walk, nor hold his head upright, nor easily move from where he sat...⁷⁹

The loss of movement described by *Wethamsted’s Register* is corroborated by the Paston Letters, in which the Newsletter of John Stodley describes the presentation of Prince Edward to his father and the ensuing lack of response that the deputation received, “they

⁷² B. Clarke, *Mental Disorders in Earlier Britain*, p. 196.

⁷³ King’s Bench Indictments, 1450, as cited in, K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 5.

⁷⁴ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, (Gloucestershire: 1999), p. 35.

⁷⁵ For a complete list of the cases that occurred between 1442-1450 see, B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 196.

⁷⁶ *Chronicon Angliæ & Bale’s Chronicle*, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou and the Wars of the Roses: A Source Book*, (Gloucestershire: 2000), p. 68-69.

⁷⁷ In the Fifteenth Century the distinction between mental and physical illness was not always clear. However the chronicles seem to suggest that the physical aspects of Henry’s illness stem from his psychological condition.

⁷⁸ B.F.L Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain: Exploratory Studies*, (Cardiff: 1975), p. 178.

⁷⁹ *Wethamsted’s Register*, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 6.

departed thens without any answeere or countenance savying only that ones he looked on the Prince and caste doune his eyen ayen without any more.”⁸⁰ Again reference to the disturbance in motor activity is found in an entry in the Rolls of Parliament in which Henry is described as being supported by two men who escorted him to his bedchamber.⁸¹ Henry also suffered from memory loss as related by Clare, “And he seid he never knew til that tyme, nor wist not what was seid to him, nor wist not where he had be whils he hath be seke til now.”⁸² Sources describing this episode of mental illness in 1453-54, are mutually reinforcing and as such provide a well substantiated and relatively detailed account of Henry’s condition.

The same cannot be said for Henry’s supposed relapse in 1455. After the First Battle of St Albans, Henry was mysteriously indisposed and unable to attend parliament which has given rise to speculation that Henry suffered a relapse. However, there is little evidence to suggest this. A letter from James Gresham to John Paston elucidates little, “so meche rumor is here ... and summe men ar a ferd that he is seek ageyn.”⁸³ The only other evidence of a possible relapse is evident in the summoning of the physician Kemer, “for as moche as we be occupied and laboured, as ye knowe wel, with Sickness and Infirmittees.”⁸⁴ Thus a relapse has been assumed on the basis of enigmatic and unsubstantiated evidence.

Lander suggests that with the lack of evidence and without a direct reference to another episode in the literature until 1823, the possibility of a relapse should be

⁸⁰ J. Gardiner (ed), *The Paston Letters, 1422-1509 A.D.*, vol 1, (Westminster: 1900), p. 264.

⁸¹ Rolls of Parliament, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 72.

⁸² J. Gardiner (ed), *The Paston Letters*, p. 315.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

⁸⁴ T. Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol XI, (London: 1827), p. 366.

discounted.⁸⁵ However, although the evidence of episodes prior to and after Henry's illness is lacking, it should be noted that at the onset of the king's first episode in 1453, the household managed to conceal the illness for some months. Therefore it cannot be discounted that a relapse may have occurred but was once again concealed.

Furthermore, references to Henry's continued mental instability persistently appear in the literature after his breakdown during 1453-54. Indeed, after accounting for the potential bias of some of these sources, there is evidence to suggest that Henry perhaps suffered some form of mental deterioration, thereby laying open to question the possibility that Henry made a full recovery in 1454. At the very least, it demonstrates what the public were prepared to believe. For instance, the Earl of Warwick in 1460 stated, "Our king is stupid and out of his mind: he does not rule but is ruled. The government is in the hands of the queen and her paramours."⁸⁶ Even accounting for Warwick's Yorkist political affiliations, this comment would have been believed by many others. Similarly, *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland* suggested in 1461 that,

..in consequence of an illness increasingly afflicting him for many years, he had fallen into a weak state of mind, and had for a time remained in a condition of imbecility and held the government of the realm in name only.⁸⁷

Finally, a letter from the Milanese ambassador at the court of France to the Duke of Milan, regarding the Second Battle of St Albans shows more of Henry's alleged peculiar behaviour, "The king was placed under a tree a mile away, where he laughed and sang."⁸⁸ Even when accounting for potential eyewitness bias or the possible propaganda purposes

⁸⁵ J.R. Lander, *Crown and Nobility 1450-1500*, (London: 1976), p. 77-78.

⁸⁶ The Earl of Warwick, as cited in, K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 7.

⁸⁷ H.T. Riley (ed), *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the continuations of Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers*, (Woking: 1854), p. 424.

⁸⁸ As cited in, B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 200.

that such a report could serve, the letter demonstrates that many people did not believe that Henry had made a full recovery in 1454.

Consequently an understanding of the personality and mental illness of a monarch is complex and fraught with inaccuracy and falsification, "Kings, as patients, are atypical in the stresses they meet and the kind of handling they are likely to receive, and there are many reasons for distortion or concealment in the records of their illnesses."⁸⁹ Modern psychology states that mental illness often has a genetic component but that; "The hereditary potential with which an individual enters the world is very much influenced by the environment that she or he encounters."⁹⁰ Charles VI's maternal family, the Bourbons, had a history of mental illness and the monarch's mother had suffered a mental breakdown.⁹¹ Henry VI was the grandson of Charles VI and may therefore have inherited a genetic predisposition to mental illness.⁹² Nonetheless, it is impossible to examine the extent to which either genetic or environmental factors play a role in the onset of Charles and Henry's illnesses. However in the absence of any substantial evidence of mental disturbance in Charles VI's siblings and in his children, nor in Henry VI's Tudor half-siblings, environmental factors may prove a deciding factor in this monarch's mental illness.⁹³ But what elements are common to Charles and Henry that was not present for

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 176.

⁹⁰ R.L. Atkinson, R.C. Atkinson & E.R. Hilgard, *Introduction to Psychology*, 8th ed., (New York: 1983), p. 57.

⁹¹ See R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 9, V. Green, *The Madness of Kings*, p. 74 & B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 188.

⁹² V. Green, *The Madness of Kings*, p. 61. For an account against this view see, B.F.L. Clarke, *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain*, p. 188.

⁹³ The semantics regarding mental illness must also be considered in this context. For instance although members of Charles VI and Henry VI's families were not regarded as mad by their contemporaries, does not mean they would be considered sane by today's standards. In this type of analysis we are heavily constrained by what Foucault would term the temporal and cultural constructions of madness. For more see, M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: 1967) & M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, tr. A.M. Sheridan, (New York: 1972).

their respective families? The obvious answer is the stresses of kingship and therefore an examination of the combination of mental instability and these environmental stresses may be of some considerable value.

Chapter Two:

Illness and Kingship – A Nexus

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“Personality disorders have an incapacitating effect on those who hold positions of authority and responsibility, for conditions that may well be tolerable for a common citizen may prove to be disastrous in a ruler or statesman.”⁹⁴ A king constituted the nucleus of Medieval government and was expected to act in accordance with the prevailing constructions of kingship which delineated the king’s role in government. Moreover the expectations of a king were continually reaffirmed and articulated through the medium of political literature, “The theorist’s task was to express contemporary understanding of the rights and obligations of monarchy in such a way as to assist his master in attaining immediate objectives.”⁹⁵ Although such works represented more idealised notions of kingship, the practical expectations were no less exacting. Consequently the requirements of kingship could prove unduly burdensome for monarchs with weak or unstable personalities, such as Charles VI or Henry VI. By examining the key areas of Charles and Henry’s failings as monarchs, particularly where they intersect with major bouts of mental illness we may hope to understand the extent to which their mental illnesses, exacerbated their failings as rulers, “Theories of monarchy, ways of perceiving and understanding kingship, in fifteenth century France and England were therefore, to a great extent, expounded in conditions of crisis...”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ V. Green, *The Madness of Kings*, p. 14.

⁹⁵ A. Gross, *The Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship: Sir John Fortescue and the Crisis of Monarchy in Fifteenth-Century England*, (Lincolnshire: 1996), p. 12.

⁹⁶ J.H. Burns, *Lordship, Kingship and Empire, The Idea of Monarchy 1400-1525*, (Oxford: 1992), p. 40.

French Kingship

The primary obligation of a French monarch was to safeguard public welfare. In order to do this it was expected that a monarch would take counsel. Traditionally the princes of the blood were called upon to act as counsellors for the king, therefore the issue of who could legitimately advise the king could be highly contentious. Previously, Charles V broke with tradition by choosing advisers based on merit rather than rank. This was perceived as a threat by the princes of the blood, who contemptuously referred to the king's advisers as the Marmousets.⁹⁷ These advisers were dismissed from power during the minority of Charles VI but were recalled in 1388, when the king discarded the tutelage of his uncles. However the Marmouset's position in government was solely dependent upon the king and thus in 1392, during Charles VI's first recorded episode of mental illness, the royal uncles reclaimed power; and they then sought to prevent further challenges to their power should the king recover.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, Charles' mental illness destabilised the political situation insofar as it caused a power struggle on several occasions between the royal uncles and the Marmousets.⁹⁹ This power struggle set a precedent for further conflicts to emerge during future periods of the king's illness and this pattern of political feuding was replicated throughout the reign of Charles.

⁹⁷ Henneman has demonstrated that although considered to be low born by the princes of the blood, many of the Marmousets were from the lesser nobility, see, J.B. Henneman, 'Who Were the Marmousets?', *Medieval Prosopography*, vol 5, 1984.

⁹⁸ Three Marmousets were arrested and five had their pensions terminated. However, Henneman demonstrates that only three Marmousets were permanently expelled from the government - Clisson, La Rivière and Le Mercier. J.B. Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France Under Charles V and Charles VI*, (Philadelphia: 1996), p. 158-160.

⁹⁹ This process of destabilisation culminated in the development of the Armagnac faction, for as Henneman has demonstrated, the Marmousets were the forerunners to the anti-Burgundian Armagnac party. See J.B. Henneman, 'Who Were the Marmousets?', *passim*.

“The inability of the king to rule left as usual a vacuum which could only be filled by the leading members of the royal family.”¹⁰⁰ But as France was a centralised state it was expected that the king would actively rule and not create an aristocratic oligarchy, which could only serve to decrease his participation in politics. However due to Charles’ mental illness, royal power was intermittently placed in the hands of the princes of the blood, who were often rendered impotent by their own internal conflicts. A by-product of this climate of mistrust and antagonism was the struggle to control the king and government policy, thereby ensuring the political survival of individual magnates, “The secret of success was, of course, control of the person of the king. ‘Obedience and loyalty’ to Charles VI meant dominating and making use of this weak and periodically insane ruler.”¹⁰¹ In this way the Burgundians and Armagnacs sought to protect themselves against one another and to pursue their own agendas.

However, this dangerous political struggle led to an increase in the power of the over mighty-subject. The late fourteenth century brought structural changes to feudal society which had the potential to obstruct the king’s personal rule. For instance, some duchies had evolved to the point where they were akin to self-contained kingdoms and their governmental, administrative and judicial infrastructures mimicked that of the state. This effectively meant that a duke could rule, independent of the king. Notable examples here are the duchies of Burgundy, Berry and Brittany.¹⁰² Perroy suggests that,

¹⁰⁰ G. Holmes, *Europe: Hierarchy and Revolt 1320-1450*, (New York: 1976), p. 242.

¹⁰¹ R. Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power*, (London: 1966), p. 29.

¹⁰² Arguably, Burgundy was the best evolved of these three. For the process by which this duchy was transformed into what Perroy would call a principality see, J. Calmette, *The Golden Age of Burgundy, The Magnificent Dukes and their Courts* & R. Vaughan, *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State*, (London: 1962).

These rival administrations might not have been very dangerous for the king, had the princes carried on their government on strictly old-fashioned lines. Theoretically, the king's overlordship was still observed, with judicial appeals to Parliament, the right to levy feudal contingents, and the right to collect taxes. But all these rights were subtly and gradually annihilated.¹⁰³

Thus the king's ability to rule his kingdom diminished, and this potentially non-threatening scenario was transformed, primarily due to Charles VI's mental illness.

The growth of ducal power, thereby limiting royal authority is best demonstrated by the inability of Charles to control the Burgundian and Armagnac factions in later years. For instance in 1410 a group of French nobles including the dukes of Berry, Brittany and Orléans formed the League of Gien, for the purpose of removing the 'evil' counsellors surrounding the king. The anonymous author (and Burgundian partisan), of the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, regarded the formation of this confederation as a direct threat to Burgundy, "And none of this was for any reason except the spite they felt because the Parisians loved the Duke of Burgundy so dearly."¹⁰⁴ In order to defuse potential armed conflict, Charles forbade his subjects to aid the princes of the blood. However Berry's independent power was such that he was able to disregard this royal order. Even though Charles promised the League indemnity from prosecution, he could not force them to disband. Eventually, intervention from the University of Paris prevented this hostile situation from escalating into armed conflict.

A similar situation occurred the following year (1411), when tensions flared with the defection of Berry from the League. Although Charles prohibited the princes of the blood to amass armies, Charles of Orléans could not be made to obey the royal command

¹⁰³ E. Perroy, 'Feudalism or Principalities in Fifteenth Century France', vol 20, 1943-45, p. 183.

¹⁰⁴ J. Shirley (tr & ed), *A Parisian Journal 1405-1449*, (Oxford: 1968), p. 52.

as he believed, “that he could not reply to any of the requests that had been made because certain persons who sat in the royal council were not only his enemies but also the king’s, and they were preventing justice from being done.”¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the king’s attempts to enforce peace failed and civil war erupted in 1411. Thus Charles’ mental illness diminished his authority, thereby rendering his responses to potentially destabilising scenarios futile. Moreover the entrenchment of the powerful magnate, as a result of Charles’ ‘absences’ from government, also meant that when the king was well enough to actively participate in politics, he often lacked the power and ability to enforce the royal will. As Lewis has stated, “the magnate hey-day was the reign of Charles VI.”¹⁰⁶

The lack of power to enforce royal will could undermine a king’s ability to act in accordance with other expectations of kingship, particularly with reference to the law. If a king lacked authority how could he function as protector of the laws of his realm? “In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was generally agreed that the king should conserve the laws.”¹⁰⁷ Thus the king was both subject to and bound by the laws of the realm. Moreover, the king’s stance regarding law was inextricably bound to the dispensing of justice. Guenée has suggested that, “The good prince was in effect known by establishing the rule of peace. He achieved this by the practice of justice.”¹⁰⁸ This articulation by Isidore of Seville in the sixth century was no less applicable in fourteenth and fifteenth century France.

¹⁰⁵ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ P.S. Lewis, *Later Medieval France, the Polity*, (London: 1968), p. 129.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁸ B. Guenée, *States and Rulers*, p. 71.

The assassination of Louis of Orléans demonstrates the connections between law, justice and peace and how the mental illness of Charles VI prevented him from fulfilling these expectations of kingship. This event destabilised the political situation in France, primarily because of Charles VI's inability to provide a consistent response to the crime - a direct result of his mental illness. Despite the confession of John the Fearless, the government seemed slow to react,

The assassination of the brother of the king by the duke of Burgundy shattered and demoralised them; instead of uniting, it divided them. While the shock paralysed them, the knowledge that there was considerable public support for John's deed prolonged and deepened their inaction.¹⁰⁹

Eventually, Burgundy was expelled from the government, and more importantly his guardianship of the dauphin was revoked. However John the Fearless was never tried for the assassination. Instead he effected his return to the forefront of politics faster than could reasonably be expected, given his crime.¹¹⁰ John the Fearless proclaimed his action to be one of tyrannicide, justified by Orléans oppression of the French people through excessive taxation and the prevention of reform.¹¹¹

Famiglietti suggests that the onset of Charles's minor episode in 1407 after the assassination was propitious for John the Fearless. Prior to the onset of this illness, Charles had expressed the wish to prosecute Burgundy and was implored to do so by his sister-in-law, the dowager duchess of Orléans. Illness however, altered his perception of the deed and inclined him to side with Burgundy. It is possible that Charles' paranoid

¹⁰⁹ R. Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, p. 67.

¹¹⁰ A conference was held at Amiens in January 1408 but John the Fearless still refused to play the role of penitent. Instead he marched on Paris and had his justification of the assassination read before the court. This justification can be found in full in Monstrelet,

¹¹¹ For Burgundy's justification of the assassination see, E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, p. 61 -81. For the Orléanist's counter claims see, p. 89-115.

tendancies disposed him to believe Burgundy's explanation that Orléans had been planning to usurp the French crown.¹¹² Burgundy's political assassination of Louis of Orléans was therefore transformed into an act of loyalty that had saved the French monarchy. Consequently, John the Fearless resumed his place in French politics, including his guardianship of the dauphin.

Charles's response to this potentially destabilising situation was inadequate; he had failed to enforce the laws of the realm by refusing to properly punish Burgundy and his cohorts. Justice according to the Orléanists had not been served. Eventually, this event became the catalyst for civil war and irrevocably widened the rift between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, "The Orléans family pursued a relentless quest for revenge, which continually threatened to upset the precarious equilibrium of the government..."¹¹³ Consequently the nature of Burgundian and Armagnac power struggles after 1407, became more violent and disruptive. Therefore Charles' mental illness, after the assassination of his brother in 1407, impeded his ability to act in accordance with prevailing notions of kingship - the preservation of law, the dispensing of justice and the keeping of the peace.

In light of Charles VI's inability to aspire to notions of kingship, due to mental illness, writers such as Juvenal des Ursins, de Terrevermeille, Gerson and Salmon commenced an examination of the boundaries between legitimate rule and tyranny.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ibid., p. 63.

¹¹³ R.C. Famiglietti, *The French Monarchy in Crisis, 1392-1415, and the Political Role of the Dauphin, Louis of France, Duke of Guyenne*, unpublished thesis, (University of New York: 1982), p. 1.

¹¹⁴ P.S. Lewis, 'Jean Juvenal des Ursins and the Common Literary Attitude Towards Tyranny in Fifteenth Century France', *Medium Aevum*, vol 34, 1965, C. Taylor, 'Sir John Fortescue and the French Polemical Treatises of the Hundred Years War', *English Historical Review*, vol 114, 1999, H.H. Rowen, *The King's State, Proprietary Dynasticism in Early Modern France*, (New Jersey: 1980), p. 5-26.

The link between mental illness and tyranny was further expanded by *The Westminster Chronicle*, "Some sources say, however, that he later recovered from his malady and played the despot over his people more savagely than he ever had done in the past, according to report - or rather according to true and established fact."¹¹⁵ Moreover, the concept of 'rex inutilis' demonstrates how medieval political writers viewed the consequences of the king's mental illness. To address this problem Terrevermeille suggested that, "the incapacity of a *rex inutilis* necessitates, if not in the full sense his removal from the throne, at all events the effective transfer of his authority to other hands."¹¹⁶ Thus writers contemporary to Charles VI believed that the king had failed to achieve the ideals and practicalities of kingship. Moreover they attributed this failure to his mental instability, "From this unfortunate disorder may be dated all the miseries that befel his realm..."¹¹⁷ and as Lewis states,

A Valois king in the later middle ages was far from the empyrean in which his propagandists put him. Although he appeared to rule the game his wits were constantly stretched to keep the upper hand. And, although God may have given him authority, God might not have provided him, poor human, with wits enough.¹¹⁸

English Kingship

As in France, an English king was expected to rule with advice from the council,

It could not be left to the ruler's virtue alone: he also needed information. He obtained it by listening to the counsels of his subjects. Men were usually urged to take counsel on two distinct, though interrelated, grounds. On the

¹¹⁵ "Set postea, secundum quosdam, convaluit ipse de sua infirmitate et exercuit tyrannidem in populo suo atrocius quam umquam antea fecerat, secundum relata, immo etiam secundum veridica et probata." L.C. Hector & B.F. Harvey (eds), *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, (Oxford: 1982), p. 501.

¹¹⁶ J.H. Burns, *Lordship, Kingship and Empire*, p. 46.

¹¹⁷ E. de Monstrelet, *Chronicles*, vol 1, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ P.S. Lewis, *Later Medieval France*, p. 110.

one hand, the more counsel there was, the better the quality of the judgement. On the other, there was a residual belief in the principle that what affected all should be advised by all.¹¹⁹

The question of who could give counsel was also a contentious issue in England. Here however, the problem concerned not the rank of advisers, but the exclusion of those who could claim a right to advise the king, namely the duke of York.¹²⁰ This was affirmed by the Kentish rebels during the Cade Rebellion (1450)¹²¹,

[The king's true commons] desire that he will dismiss all the false progeny and affinity of the Duke of Suffolk, who are openly known, and that they be punished according to the law of the land. Moreover, the king should take about his noble person men of his true blood from his royal realm, that is to say, the high and mighty prince the Duke of York, exiled from our sovereign lord's presence by the machinations of the false traitor the Duke of Suffolk and his affinity.¹²²

Popular resentment against the Duke of Suffolk is also evident in political poems such as 'On the Arrest of the Duke of Suffolk'¹²³, 'A Warning to King Henry'¹²⁴, 'Verses Against the Duke of Suffolk'¹²⁵ and 'On the Death of the Duke of Suffolk'¹²⁶. In contrast, other poems such as, 'Epitaph for Richard Duke of York'¹²⁷ and 'A Political Retrospect'¹²⁸, highlight the regard in which the Duke of York was held, and the perception of the House of York as England's salvation. The exclusion of prominent nobles from the council demonstrates Henry's capacity to be easily influenced. Furthermore, the narrow scope of

¹¹⁹ J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, (Cambridge: 1996), p. 25-26.

¹²⁰ However, Cade's rebels claimed that the Beaufort's were of insufficient rank to hold prominent positions in the government. Although the Beauforts had been legitimised by parliament during the reign of Henry IV, they were initially the illegitimate offspring of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. See Table Four: The Beaufort Family.

¹²¹ For more information regarding the Cade rebellion see, H.M. Lyle, *The Rebellion of Jack Cade, 1450*, (London: 1950).

¹²² Proclamation of Jack Cade, June 1450, as cited in K. Dockray (ed), *A Source Book*, p. 48.

¹²³ T. Wright (ed), *Political Poems and Songs*, vol 2, (London: 1861), p. 224-225.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 229-231.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 232-234.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

advice given to the king reveals the council as being potentially biased, thus weakening Henry's decision making abilities. Nonetheless, this situation must be ascribed to Henry's political ineptitude rather than his mental illness, as no substantiated signs of instability were apparent in the late 1440's or early 1450's.

"A fifteenth-century king both reigned and ruled. For his subjects, great and small, his was the supreme authority on earth."¹²⁹ As with French monarchs, English kings were expected to actively partake in ruling the nation. However, there is much debate over the extent to which Henry VI participated in government. Watts and Carpenter affirm Henry's minimal involvement in politics. Conversely, Griffiths and Wolffe present Henry VI as an active king, although recognising his incompetence as a ruler,¹³⁰ whilst McFarlane views Henry VI as imbecilic and incompetent.¹³¹ Davies however, is more moderate, "But clearly Henry's qualities were not those of a king. It was not so much a question of Henry's non-involvement in government business; the trouble was that he did interfere, generally wrong-headedly."¹³² Perhaps the only policies that may be directly attributed to Henry VI are the foundation of Eton and Kings Colleges. Attempting to discern the nature of the impact of kingship on Henry VI's personality is therefore problematic because the extent of his involvement in political affairs cannot be ascertained.

With regard to the law, an English king was more limited than his French counterpart, "The king ruled by law and that law was made, not by himself alone, but by

¹²⁸ Ibid., 267-270.

¹²⁹ B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, p. 25.

¹³⁰ See, R.A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, & B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*.

the king in parliament.”¹³³ Unlike in France, checks on royal authority were by legitimate institutions rather than through the illegitimate erosion of royal prerogatives. As a result parliament could potentially check the royal will. For example, in 1449 parliament revoked all royal grants in order to replenish the depleted treasury. Wolffe links this with the continued attack on Suffolk’s, supporters and family, many of whom had benefited from these generous grants.¹³⁴ Alienation of royal property was a highly contentious issue as is evident through the public’s outrage over the cession of Maine and Anjou, on Henry’s marriage to Margaret of Anjou. This was an unpopular move, especially at a time when the war in France was not progressing satisfactorily.¹³⁵

Wolffe recounts two main examples where the law was abused during Henry’s reign, both examples occurring during a period when Henry was considered sane. The first concerns the trial of Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester for necromancy and the second was the political downfall of the Duke of Gloucester.

In 1441, allegations of witchcraft were made against the Duchess of Gloucester,

And then it was known that certain clerks and women that are called witches had made their operation and their craft to destroy men and women, or whom they list, unto death by their false craft and working. Wherof Dame Eleanor Cobham, which was the Duchess of Gloucester, was named principally of these acts and false deeds for to destroy the king, whom God save and keep!¹³⁶

¹³¹ See J. Watts, *Henry VI*, C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses* & K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, (London: 1981).

¹³² C.S.L. Davies, *Peace, Print and Protestantism*, (St Albans: 1977), p. 65.

¹³³ B.P. Wolffe, ‘The Personal Rule of Henry VI’, in S.B. Chrimes, C.D. Ross & R.A. Griffiths (ed), *Fifteenth Century England 1399-1509, Studies in Politics and Society*, (Manchester: 1972), p. 30.

¹³⁴ B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, p. 231.

¹³⁵ See, P.A. Lee, ‘Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol 39 (1986), p. 185 & A Crawford, ‘The King’s Burden?: The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth Century England’, in R.E. Archer (ed), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England*, (Gloucester: 1981).

¹³⁶ F.W.D. Brie (ed), *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, Early English Text Society, part 2, no. 136, (Cambridge: 1908), p. 477-478.

The charges against Eleanor Cobham were upheld and her marriage to Gloucester was annulled. She was forced to perform public penance and was then imprisoned for life.¹³⁷ However Griffiths suggests that this trial was a ploy to further discredit Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, whose political career was jeopardised by the accusations against his wife.¹³⁸ Thus in this instance the laws of England were used to pursue the political agenda of a faction who regarded the Duke of Gloucester as a threat; a threat made more real by his standing with regard to the succession.¹³⁹

The downfall of the Duke of Gloucester is Wolffe's second example. The faction previously led by Cardinal Beaufort, exploited suspicions that Gloucester was planning the king's death in order to usurp the throne.¹⁴⁰ The author of the *English Chronicle* placed the blame on Suffolk,¹⁴¹ whilst Polydore Vergil suggests that the Queen's machinations brought this about.¹⁴² Regardless of the accuracy of these statements, it is reasonable to believe that the case of treason against Gloucester was manufactured by his political rivals who included Suffolk and possibly the Queen. The real problem lay in Gloucester's continued advocacy of continuing the war in France whilst other factions were disposed towards a policy of peace. By 1442 this, combined with his damaged reputation (due to his wife's disgrace), politically isolated Gloucester, "Every effort was made, therefore, to alienate the King from his uncle; suspicions as to his intentions were

¹³⁷ See, H.A. Kelly, 'English Kings and the Fear of Sorcery', *Medieval Studies*, 39, 1977, p. 206-238.

¹³⁸ See R.A. Griffiths, 'The Trial of Eleanor Cobham as an episode in the fall of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 51, 1968-9, p. 381-399.

¹³⁹ Although Gloucester was not officially named Henry's heir, he was regarded by many to be next in the line of succession. See Table Two: The House of Lancaster.

¹⁴⁰ B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, p. 129-132. These accusations were extensions of those made against Eleanor Cobham. It was suggested that she was motivated by the desire to become queen.

¹⁴¹ J.S. Davies (ed), *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI*, Camden Society Old Series, vol 64, (London: 1856), p. 62.

hazarded, and by degrees suggestions developed into direct accusations.”¹⁴³ Again, through the usage of law as a means of furthering private agendas, Henry abused the laws of his realm, allowing a miscarriage of justice. Although Henry’s direct involvement in these events cannot be discerned, as head of the body politic he must be regarded as politically culpable. Moreover, as there were no noticeable signs of mental illness at this stage, Henry’s failures must be seen as political ineptitude.

As with the case of Charles VI, Henry VI’s inability to adequately deal with aristocratic feuds, disrupted the peace of the realm. In the North and the West March, the Percies and the Nevilles were often in conflict as both families struggled for dominance in their respective regions.¹⁴⁴ The crown had inadvertently exacerbated this problem by using the Nevilles to restrain Percy ambitions. Storey states that, “The policy of using Neville to balance Percy had in fact been initiated by John of Gaunt, when he was Richard II’s lieutenant in the marches.”¹⁴⁵ But if Henry VI was not directly responsible for the instigation of this policy, he certainly failed to address the tensions and violent conflicts that erupted as a consequence. Failure on Henry’s part to diffuse these tensions eventually forced the Nevilles to further their own interests by allying themselves with the House of York.

Additionally, Henry’s policy of favouring men such as Suffolk and Somerset over York intensified the feuding amongst these aristocrats. The feud between York and

¹⁴² H. Ellis (ed), *Polydore Vergil’s English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III*, Camden Society Old Series, vol 29, (London: 1844), p. 72-73.

¹⁴³ K.A. Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, (London: 1907), p. 289.

¹⁴⁴ For the local and national significance of the Percy and Neville feud see, R.A. Griffiths, ‘Local Rivalries and National Politics: The Percies, the Nevilles and the Duke of Exeter, 1452-1454’, in R.A. Griffiths, *King and Country, England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century*, (London: 1991).

¹⁴⁵ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 112.

Somerset had intensified during the period of York's first protectorate¹⁴⁶ as Somerset's position had become tenuous with the mental illness of Henry VI. As the Beauforts had been excluded from the succession by Henry IV in 1407, Somerset could not hope to take the lead role in government during the king's illness or the minority of his son, should such a situation arise. However York had his own claim to the throne and was one of Henry VI's closest adult, male relatives,¹⁴⁷ and could therefore claim a greater right to a leading role in any provisional government. Consequently, "The Duke of Somerset's political future depended on the king's recovery."¹⁴⁸ The York/Somerset feud over political survival exacerbated the tensions between the two magnates and would eventually lead to armed conflict.

At best Henry's responses to the feud were inadequate. For example, he attempted to dispel the enmity resulting from the Battle of St Albans, on what has become known as the Loveday.¹⁴⁹ A temporary reconciliation was achieved and York left St Pauls arm in arm with the Queen. Although the popular ballad, 'The Loveday of 1458' expresses the general optimism of the populace, Johnson suggests that Loveday was seriously flawed,

By allowing England's political problems to be reduced to the level of family squabbles, Henry was overlooking issues of much deeper significance which had been troubling the body politic since 1450, if not earlier. But then, had Henry been able to see so clearly, many of the deeper problems would not

¹⁴⁶ For the origins of the conflict between Somerset and York see, M.K. Jones, 'Somerset and York and the Wars of the Roses', *English Historical Review*, vol 14, 1989, p. 285-307.

¹⁴⁷ Other families such as the Hollands had an equal claim to the throne. Relational proximity to Henry VI is dependent on arguments concerning the superiority of these nobles' claims to the throne. As the laws of succession were not clearly established in Fifteenth Century England, this an issue still being debated.

¹⁴⁸ P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, p. 122.

¹⁴⁹ Somerset and other prominent Lancastrian lords had died at the first Battle of St Albans in 1455. However there was a new generations of lords who wanted revenge for their father's deaths. The new Duke of Somerset was the most prominent of these disaffected lords and thus the feud ensued.

have taken root...That he rejoiced with a genuine heart and voice cannot be doubted, but it is difficult to dispel the image of weary cynicism on the faces of other participants.¹⁵⁰

Johnson is thus implying that Henry demonstrated defective judgement. Whether this is a consequence of mental illness or naivety is open to interpretation, however armed conflict seemed inevitable in the wake of Henry's defective response to the York/Somerset feud and his failure to adequately control the conflicts amongst the nobility posed great risk to the stability of his kingdom.

Undoubtedly, Henry failed to meet the standards required of an English king. However, it is difficult to state clearly if his failures were as a result of the impact of the stresses of kingship on an unstable or inept personality. Such an analysis is further complicated by the debate over the extent to which Henry was involved in politics and that his mental illness can only be substantiated for a mere eighteen months of his reign. Accordingly, Henry's mental illness cannot be held accountable for his failings, as many of these were apparent both prior to or after Henry's period of mental instability. However it would be reasonable to suggest that the effects of Henry's misrule did impact on this unstable personality. For instance, Storey talks in terms of the king suffering a shock¹⁵¹, and certainly over the preceding years there was an accumulation of destabilising events, which may have provided such a shock. By 1450, "Normandy was lost; the crown was bankrupt; the king's counsellors were accused of corruption and the men of the south-east had risen up and pillaged London."¹⁵² Certainly this series of

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 183-185.

¹⁵¹ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 136.

¹⁵² J. Watts, *Henry VI*, p. 39.

disastrous events must have impacted upon a king whose personality was if not unstable, certainly weak.

The impact of the stresses of kingship on Charles VI and Henry VI's failures as kings cannot be entirely discerned. Nor can the extent to which these stresses impacted upon their personalities be fully determined. We cannot even be sure of the inherent problems concerning their respective personalities.¹⁵³ Therefore we are faced with a dilemma, "how is it possible to reconcile the madness which is upsetting the balance of his mind with the act of governance, for which, by the very nature of kingship, he is responsible?"¹⁵⁴ Realistically, it is impossible to reconcile these issues; all that may be discerned is that where there is a nexus of mental illness and the stresses of kingship, turbulent events are likely to occur. This is demonstrated in the case of Charles VI, whereby the combination of mental illness and the stresses of kingship both facilitated and escalated magnate feuds, often resulting in armed conflict. However, with regard to Henry VI, this nexus is not as evident, because the examples discussed more often than not demonstrate the melding of the stresses of kingship and ineptitude. The nexus between mental illness and kingship may only be viewed in the context of the protectorate and the period of recovery. Consequently, the impact of the combination of mental instability and the stresses of kingship on the political landscape becomes of central importance. As Carpenter had suggested; "It was the king whose abilities and ambition determined whether there would be rule or anarchy."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ See Chapter One: The Problems of Personality.

¹⁵⁴ V. Green, *The Madness of Kings*, p. 1.

Chapter Three:
The Struggle for Stability

Chapter Three: The Struggle for Stability

As previously discussed the difference between periods of sanity and times of relative lucidity, demonstrate how the nexus between mental illness and kingship both facilitated and escalated tensions amongst the nobility who were vying for positions of prominence in the provisional governments formulated in the king's absence. However these tensions were underlying even in periods of relative lucidity, although with less intensity, either because of the king's political ineptitude or because the nobles sought to consolidate their positions should the king suffer a relapse. Therefore even when these king's were considered 'recovered' the struggle to ensure the stability of the political sphere continued. Therefore the nexus between mental illness and the stresses of kingship serves to demonstrate the impact of these illnesses on the medieval system of government, which was confronted with this unprecedented situation. Although in both nations, attempts were made by leading members of the nobility and in the case of Charles VI, the king himself, to ensure the stability of the regime, these attempts were often hampered either by the vacillation of the king's policy, the struggles amongst the nobility, or by the system of medieval monarchy which was not conducive to government without a king. Consequently this instability in the government further impacted on the nation at large through the inevitable armed conflicts that stemmed from the government's failure to provide stability in the wake of the king's illnesses. "Medieval monarchy was subject to endemic conflict and rebellion because it depended upon a

¹⁵⁵ C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 27.

balance between the prince and the nobility which could easily be upset by personal failings.”¹⁵⁶

The Struggle for Stability in France

In 1392 the government of France was forced to seek hasty solutions to the predicament of a monarchy without a king. According to Froissart, there was much debate over who should have the regency - Orléans or Burgundy. The council settled that, “it was thought advisable, from the youth of the duke of Orléans, which made him unfit to bear so great a weight, that the two uncles of the king should govern the kingdom; but that the duke of Burgundy should be the principal.”¹⁵⁷ Given his new, principal status, Burgundy moved swiftly to remove from power the king’s advisers known as the Marmousets.¹⁵⁸ The Marmousets, who relied on the support of the king, were excluded from the deliberations concerning the regency due to the mental instability of their king.¹⁵⁹ The ascendancy of Burgundy to the principal position not only negated the Marmousets but fuelled further tensions between Orléans and Burgundy. No significant conflict would arise however, until 1401 when tensions flared over royal papal policy.¹⁶⁰ Thus the government’s solution to this crisis was to re-enact the form of the minority regency.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, a more permanent solution was required in the event of the king’s possible relapse.

¹⁵⁶ G. Holmes, *Europe: Hierarchy and Revolt 1320-1450*, (New York: 1976), p. 239.

¹⁵⁷ J. Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, vol 2, p. 536.

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter Two: The Stresses of Kingship.

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter Two: The Stresses of Kingship

¹⁶⁰ For the origins of royal policy regarding the papal schism see, M. de Weese, *A Study of Decision Making in France During the Reign of Charles VI: The Rejection of the Avignon Papacy 1395*, (Michigan: 1984).

¹⁶¹ For the formation of the minority political settlement see, R. Vaughan, *Philip the Bold*, p. 39-41, J.B. Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, p. 103-105 & E. R. Chamberlin, ‘The Court of Charles VI of France’, *History Today*, vol XIII, no 2, 1963, p. 94.

Being aware of the episodic nature of his illness, Charles was also cognisant of his possible premature death, which would once again leave France in the hands of a minor.¹⁶² His concerns were evident from 1393 onwards, during which time he continually reassessed and altered his own ordinances for the provision of government in his absence or death. This constant vacillation proved a significant threat to political stability, possibly as great a threat as the king's illness itself. As Famiglietti suggests, "It proved unfortunate for France that the king's illness did not totally incapacitate him, but, in fact, he often appeared sane to his contemporaries, and thus they allowed him, whenever he was able, to continue to rule with full power."¹⁶³

In 1393 after Charles's recovery from his first psychotic episode, his brother Louis of Orléans was proclaimed regent in the event of a relapse.¹⁶⁴ As the nearest male relative of the king, this was deemed his right, as indeed Anjou's assumption of the regency on the death of Charles V had been considered appropriate.¹⁶⁵ By 1402, Isabeau of Bavaria was empowered to conduct government business and to choose as many princes of the blood and councillors as she deemed adequate for her needs. This new ordinance annulled the previous ordinance of 1393.¹⁶⁶

In 1403 however, Charles suspected that Isabeau was biased towards her Bavarian family and thus sought to check her powers. Accordingly, the ordinance of April 1403 removed Isabeau's right to choose her advisers. Instead, those princes of the blood then

¹⁶² For Charles' awareness of the nature of his illness see, Chapter One: The Problems of Personality.

¹⁶³ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. xi.

¹⁶⁴ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁵ The law of primogeniture dictated that the eldest and closest male relative should be sole heir. Thus there were legal precedents surrounding the appointments of Anjou and Orleans.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

at court were entitled to form a council. This measure also removed Isabeau's right to make decisions regardless of the advice she received, in favour of majority decisions.¹⁶⁷

Again in 1403, Charles sought to address the potentiality of a minority should he die during an episode of mental illness. This resulted in the cancellation of Charles V's 1374 ordinance, which Charles had subsequently reaffirmed in 1392.¹⁶⁸

The king stated that his successor, no matter what his age, must be crowned immediately and the kingdom ruled in his name without any regency. The queen would have the *garde, nourrissement et gouvernement* of the new king and any of the other royal children who were still minors. During the minority the government would be controlled by a council made up of the queen, the dukes, the princes of the blood, and the royal councillors. Decisions would be based on the will of the majority of those present without regard for their *grandeur, auctorite et estas*. If the queen died during the minority, the council would take over the *garde et gouvernement* of the king.¹⁶⁹

These provisions were made so as to provide for a smooth transition of power in the event of Charles' death or permanent mental incapacity, thereby avoiding a power struggle as had occurred on his own succession in 1380.

1403 saw yet another change to these ordinances. Orléans managed to persuade Charles to restore his claim to the regency in a secret agreement on May 7, thereby annulling all previous ordinances. However by May 11, pressure exerted by Burgundy resulted in the cancellation of this ordinance on the grounds that it was damaging to the interests of the crown.¹⁷⁰ Henneman states that, "The king's mental illness had now reached the point at which he might issue conflicting orders within a few days of each

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶⁸ This ordinance had established fourteen as the age of majority for all kings of France.

¹⁶⁹ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

other according to who had access to him.”¹⁷¹ Certainly Burgundy’s ability to gain access to the king enabled him to convince Charles of the dangers posed by this ordinance.

Ironically in 1406, Burgundy persuaded Charles VI to make a secret ordinance which gave him pre-eminence in any government, in the king’s absence. Consequently, this annulled the queen’s right to the guardianship of the new king and ensured the total exclusion of Orléans from the government. However the assassination of Louis of Orléans by Burgundy in 1407 resulted in his temporary exile from the government.¹⁷² Furthermore, a new ordinance negated the clandestine ordinance of 1406 and reaffirmed that of April 1403. Moreover, this ordinance provided that, “the Parlement would not consider valid, any letter of cancellation obtained from the king in a more private setting.”¹⁷³ Hence future secretive ordinances, such as those contracted in the manner of May 1403 and 1406, would have no legal status.

In 1407 arrangements had been made for the dauphin to take part in council, if the king was unable to attend to government business. In the absence of his father, the Duke of Guyenne was given the power to act for the king, should the queen be unable or not wish to do so herself.¹⁷⁴ This final significant change was made to governmental provisions in 1408, to overcome difficulties should the king become ill once again.

By 1415, the year of Louis of Guyenne’s death, his two younger brothers, John of Touraine and the future Charles VII, had ‘come of age’¹⁷⁵ thus rendering considerations

¹⁷¹ J.B. Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson*, p. 186.

¹⁷² See Chapter Two:

¹⁷³ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 65.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁵ It should be noted that both John and Charles would be considered of age, should they become King of France. As yet both were still under the traditional age of majority - twenty one. This is the reason the both were still under the guardianship of their respective father-in-laws, William of Bavaria, Count of Hainaut and Louis II, Duke of Anjou.

of the regency obsolete. Accordingly, no further changes to successional provisions occurred until 1420 with the Treaty of Troyes.¹⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the continual reassessment of ordinances created rivalry and suspicion and the stability Charles had hoped to provide in his absence, removed what little the government already had.

Charles was suspicious of many family members, as evident through the numerous alterations to ordinances, although his suspicions were not always unfounded. The territorial ambitions of Orléans in the Empire possibly provided the impetus for Charles to suspect Orléans' desire to usurp the throne. Similarly, the territorial expansion of Burgundy, combined with the growing independence of the duchy, may have caused ongoing concern. Furthermore, Isabeau acting in the interests of her Bavarian family had been instrumental in persuading Charles VI to renege on a marriage alliance between Louis of Guyenne and Orléans' daughter.¹⁷⁷ Her actions were allegedly undertaken on advice from her cousin, the emperor elect, Rupert of Bavaria, who saw such an alliance as prejudicial to Bavarian territorial interests. He insisted and persuaded Isabeau that an alliance with Burgundy would be more suitable.¹⁷⁸ It is not surprising therefore that Charles felt a need to constantly review his ordinances, given the climate of political intrigue and suspicion. This climate only intensified in the event of the king's illness. For example, Burgundy's exploitation of the king's illness, in order to gain a pardon for the assassination of Louis of Orléans, not only perverted justice but further entrenched the Orléanists quest for revenge.¹⁷⁹ As Chamberlin maintains, "The "absences" of the King,

¹⁷⁶ See Appendix 1 for the nature of these successional changes..

¹⁷⁷ Since the only daughter of the House of Orléans had died in infancy, this may not have proved difficult to achieve.

¹⁷⁸ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 23-24.

¹⁷⁹ See Chapter Two:

as Charles' fits of madness were politically known, led to the inevitable scramble for power."¹⁸⁰

Charles' response to the formation of the League of Gien in 1410 was also hampered by minor episodes of illness. Combined with the diminution of royal authority, the League and its Burgundian enemies were able to exploit the opportunity to amass armies in order to plan the removal of the rival faction from power. The rivalry only intensified when Charles disrupted the 'impartiality' of the crown by allowing Burgundy to act against the League. Civil war was therefore inevitable, but in 1411 Charles's mental health deteriorated, leaving the Duke of Guyenne to command the royal armies. Even when peace was established in 1412, tensions remained as the Bourgeoisie of Paris claimed that Guyenne had been influenced by the confederates,

This is why peace was made so much in their favour, however much anyone might object, for the King was still ill and his eldest son paid no attention to common sense, only to what he happened to want; he put his trust in young men and fools, so that the confederates did what they want with him.¹⁸¹

The increasing hostility between Burgundy and Guyenne, prompted Burgundy to exploit other events in order to counteract the possibility that Guyenne might persuade his insane father to grant greater powers to the Orléanists. This occurred in 1413 with the Cabochien Uprising during which John the Fearless exploited the reforming zeal of the Cabochien for his own benefit.¹⁸² Charles' mental health again faltered during the early stages of this crisis, thereby creating a power struggle between Guyenne and Burgundy.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ E.R. Chamberlin, 'The Court of Charles VI of France', *History Today*, vol XIII, no 2, 1963, p. 97.

¹⁸¹ J. Shirley (ed. & tr.), *A Parisian Journal*, p. 68.

¹⁸² For instance when twelve commissioners were appointed to investigate claims of nepotism and corruption in the government, John the Fearless managed to secure the appointment of at least six men who were favourable towards him. See, R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 112.

¹⁸³ Guyenne had been castigated by the Cabochiens for his frivolous lifestyle, further alienating him from Burgundy who had openly sided with the reformers.

Indeed Vaughan suggests that the attitude of the Dauphin was particularly important in the success of the Armagnac coup of 1413,

The king recovered his sanity in May and, apart from some lapses, maintained it through most of the summer. Naturally, while sane, he worked for reconciliation and peace; and he tended to support his son the dauphin and the Armagnacs, rather than John the Fearless.¹⁸⁴

John the Fearless was thus thwarted by Charles' recovery leaving him unable to exploit the power vacuum created by the king's absence. Consequently Burgundy's influence over the government diminished.

It is quite possible that as a result, Burgundy acted with caution on the subject of a possible English invasion. Despite the conciliatory policy of Guyenne and numerous calls for assistance from the crown, Burgundy heeded none. Indeed the failure of the crown to assist Harfleur was due to, "the fact that most of the nobles of nearby Picardy refused to answer the king's summons because they had been instructed by the duke of Burgundy, their overlord, to await his call to arms and not respond to anyone else's."¹⁸⁵ The continued mental illness of Charles VI and the death of Guyenne in 1415 were exploited by Burgundy who refused aid to the beleaguered French crown. Burgundy may have used this as a deliberate ploy to cement an unassailable position for himself in the event of Henry V vanquishing Charles VI and the Armagnacs.

The assassination of John the Fearless by allies of the dauphin Charles in 1419,¹⁸⁶ only served to alienate the Dauphin and the Armagnacs from the court at Melun.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ R. Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁵ R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 166.

¹⁸⁶ The extent of Charles' complicity in this crime is still the subject of widespread debate.

¹⁸⁷ By 1418, John the Fearless had persuaded Isabeau to establish joint government. This government naturally excluded the Dauphin and his Armagnac allies. John the Fearless then began to establish control over the royal administration and finances and the king's person. He also re-conquered Paris. See R.

Again as in 1407, Charles VI's failure to adequately respond to the assassination was primarily due to his mental illness. The assassination of John the Fearless did not prompt calls for revenge, as had occurred on the occasion of Orléans' murder. However, the results of royal vacillation, as a by-product of the mental instability of the king, were no less devastating. France was consequently divided into three parts, areas under Armagnac influence, Burgundian France and those areas under the control of Henry V.¹⁸⁸ Eventually the French crown was forced to make peace with Henry V and accordingly the Treaty of Troyes was signed in 1420. Hence the house of Valois was disinherited in favour of the Lancastrian dual monarchy, "Also that anone after the dethe of oure said fader and from thens forward the Coroune and the Reaume of Fraunce w' all the Rightes and appurtenaunces shull remayne and abide to us and of oure heirs for evyrmore."¹⁸⁹ Finally, the inadequacy of royal policy and the mental instability of Charles VI ensured that on Charles VII's succession, Burgundy was virtually independent and that the internal conflict in France would continue until the late fifteenth century.

The Struggle for Stability in England

Unlike in France, where the event of the king's mental incapacity prompted a rapid solution, the response in England to Henry VI's incapacity appears more gradual

Vaughan, *John the Fearless*, 263. The assassination of John the Fearless in 1419 only served to further alienate the Dauphin and his Armagnac allies from the crown and provided the impetus for the Dauphin's disinheritance. For the reaction to the assassination of Burgundy by his son see, J. Calmette, *The Golden Age of Burgundy*, p. 130-131.

¹⁸⁸ R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy*, (London: 1970), p. 1.

¹⁸⁹ A.H. Thomas & I.D. Thornley (eds), *The Great Chronicle of London* (Gloucester: 1983), 110. For the full text of the Treaty of Troyes see Appendix 1. For the ramifications of the treaty see, M.G.A. Vale, *Charles VII*, (Berkley & Los Angeles: 1974), p. 31-44, R.C. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue*, p. 194-174 & E.C. Williams, *My Lord of Bedford, 1389-1435*, (London: 1963), p. 50-58. For the impact of the Treaty of

and cautious. Indeed it remained concealed for some months. Nonetheless, a solution to this problem had to be found as Storey elucidates,

The pretence could not be kept up indefinitely; the council could hardly claim to be acting in the king's name once it became known that he was completely incapacitated, and in pressing questions like the pacification of magnates' disputes it was imperative that its authority should be beyond question.¹⁹⁰

Whatever the reasons for the delay, no efforts to effect a political solution were attempted until October, six months after the onset of Henry's illness. Although an interim solution was required, Johnson suggests that none of the Lords were comfortable in dealing with this unprecedented problem.¹⁹¹

But what finally prompted the government to act? Benet suggests that the government was forced to act from fear of Somerset's potential rule,

When the royal council realised that the king's health was not improving and fearing the ruin of the realm under the Duke of Somerset's governance was imminent, the magnates of the kingdom sent for the Duke of York who, when he arrived in London with a small retinue [on 12th November], came to the council. The Duke of Norfolk, during a council meeting charged the Duke of Somerset with treason on many counts: [as a result on the 23rd November] this evil duke was arrested.¹⁹²

The Lords may also have felt compelled to act as a result of Margaret of Anjou's request that she be made regent. Johnson suggests that Margaret was motivated by suspicions about York, "she seems to have been persuaded that the Duke of York was a threat to the

Troyes on the reputation of the Parlement of Paris, (which had supported the Treaty) see, J.M. Shennan, *The Parlement of Paris*, (London: 1968), p. 163-164.

¹⁹⁰ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 137.

¹⁹¹ P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, p. 128.

¹⁹² "Videns consilium regis Regem non convalentem et regnum sub gubernacione ducis Somersetie fere perisse Miseraunt proceres regni pro duce Eboraci qui cum paucis veniens London' in crastino sancti Martini intravit consilium et coram consilio dux Norfolche appellavit ducem Somersetie in multis articulis quod esset traditor. Et sic in festo sancti Clementis arestatus est dux iniquus Somersetie." G.L. Harriss (ed), *John Benet's Chronicle for the Years 1400-1462*, Camden Miscellany, vol 34, (London: 1972), p. 210-211.

inheritance of her child. This made English politics more fraught...Margaret of Anjou's intervention implied that the dynasty was under threat."¹⁹³ Margaret's request is outlined in the Newsletter of John Stodley, "Item, the Queene hathe made a bille of five articles, desiryng those articles to be graunted; whereof the first is that she desireth to have the hole reule of this land..."¹⁹⁴ Essentially Margaret demanded all the authority and prerogatives of kingship, a highly contentious issue, in view of her gender, "Moreovyr it ys gret abusion,/A woman of a land to be regent..."¹⁹⁵ Furthermore recent times had seen England opt for a protectorate rather than a regency.¹⁹⁶

According to Roskell the concept of a protectorate was first formally established on the death of Henry V in 1422.¹⁹⁷ The circumstances surrounding the establishment of a protectorate in 1453 closely paralleled those of 1422. York was regarded by many, although not officially¹⁹⁸, as heir to the throne, until the birth of Prince Edward in 1453. Nonetheless, like Gloucester, York was unpopular amongst the lords and had hitherto

¹⁹³ P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, p. 128-129.

¹⁹⁴ Newsletter of John Stodley, in J. Gardiner (ed), *The Paston Letters*, vol 1, p. 265.

¹⁹⁵ 'A Political Retrospect' in, T. Wright, *Political Poems and Songs*, vol 2, p. 268.

¹⁹⁶ This image of the Queen as desirous for power has contributed to the conception of her as the real ruler of the court. For arguments concerning her personality and political career see, D. Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI: A Reassessment of Her Role, 1445-1453', in R.E. Archer (ed), *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century*, (New York: 1995), p. 107-143 & P.A. Lee, 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol 39, 1986, p. 183-217. For a highly romanticised and biased account of Margaret's life and career see, P. Erlanger, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England*, tr. E. Hayms, (London: 1970).

¹⁹⁷ For the circumstances and precedents surrounding the formal establishment of a protectorate in 1422 see, J. Roskell, 'The Office and Dignity of Protector of England with special reference to its origins', *English Historical Review*, 68, 1953, p. 193-233. Henry V had made provisions for his brother Gloucester to act as regent of England throughout the prolonged minority of his son, (see, R.A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 11-27). However at this time there was some opposition to the granting of unlimited power to Gloucester, "Gloucester's claim to be regent and accountable to the king was probably felt as a threat by many, but by none more than Bishop Beaufort. In conciliar rule and shared responsibility he saw safety, and the opportunity to recover his own influence and standing.", in G.L. Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort: A Study in Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline*, (Oxford: 1988), p. 118. Despite Gloucester's vocal opposition, Henry's will was overturned and Gloucester was granted the powers of protector rather than regent.

¹⁹⁸ Griffiths suggests that a formal recognition of York as Henry's heir necessarily entailed the acceptance of the House of York's superior claim to the House of Lancaster. See, R.A. Griffiths, 'The Sense of

been politically isolated.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, the discord between York and Somerset was well known, and the Lords may have felt that a protectorate was the safest way to ensure York's accountability and to prevent the escalation of factionalism. Clearly, Somerset could not be a candidate for protector as the Beauforts had been excluded from the succession by an act of parliament in 1407. Considering that Henry VI had not thought to challenge this act while in a stable mental state, the Lords possibly believed that this would lead to an uncomfortable political precedent. Moreover, it may have produced ramifications regarding the issue of succession. Therefore the protectorate of 1453 may be considered a compromise position.²⁰⁰

The lords acknowledged the gravity of the situation in the terms of York's appointment,

Appointment, during the pleasure, by advice and assent of the lords spiritual and temporal and of the commonality of England in the present parliament, in consideration of the king's infirmity whereby his attendance to the protection of the realm and church of England would be tedious and prejudicial to his swift recovery, of Richard, duke of York, as protector and defender of the realm and church and principal councillor of the king, according to an act made in the said parliament on the date of these presents, the authority of the duke ceasing when Edward, the king's firstborn son, arrive at years of discretion, if he shall then wish to take upon himself the charge of protector and defender.²⁰¹

Clearly the settlement was envisaged as a potentially long term solution, since no mention is made concerning the king's possible recovery.

Dynasty in the Reign of Henry VI', in C. Ross (ed), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, (Gloucester: 1979), p. 20.

¹⁹⁹ Nonetheless both dukes held considerable popularity amongst the Commons and the general populace. This only further highlighted their potentiality as a threat to the prevailing factions.

²⁰⁰ For information regarding the role of the council see, R.A. Griffiths, 'The King's Council and the First Protectorate of the Duke of York 1450-1454', in *King and Country, England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century*, (London: 1991).

²⁰¹ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, vol VI, A.D. 1432-1461, 1971, p. 159.

Similar provisions were made in 1455 after the Battle of St Albans²⁰² as the king was unable to attend to his duties of kingship, the reasons for which remain unknown. Consequently it has been postulated that Henry had suffered a relapse.²⁰³ However the terms of appointment on this occasion make no reference to the king's infirmity,²⁰⁴

Wherefore it was thought by theym that were comen for the communes of this lande, that if for suche causes the kyng herafre myght not entende to the protection and defence of this lande, that it shuld like the kyng by thadvis of his said lieutenaunt and the lordes to ordeigne and purvey suche an hable persone as shuld mowe entende to the defence and protection of the said lande...²⁰⁵

If a direct reference to the king's illness is apparent in the terms of reference for the first appointment of 1453, it would seem strange to omit another such reference in 1455, if indeed Henry VI was mentally ill again. Therefore the omission of the cause of this appointment tends to support Lander's argument that Henry was not mentally ill at this time.²⁰⁶ Consequently the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the second protectorate remain obfuscated.

Although a political settlement was eventually established in England, there were inherent problems with the nature of the protectorate, "Arguably, the Protectorship was the best possible solution for the hard-pressed English polity; for the first time since the minority, it gave legitimacy to governance on behalf of the king. But even this was

²⁰² For more information concerning the First Battle of St Albans see, R. A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 741-746, R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 159-164 & J. Gardiner (ed), *The Paston Letters*, p. 327-333.

²⁰³ See Chapter One: The Problems of Personality.

²⁰⁴ For the full account of the appointment of the Duke of York see appendix 1.

²⁰⁵ Acceptance by Richard, Duke of York, of Appointment as Protector, on Conditions, 13-22 November, 1455, as cited in, S.B. Chrimes & A.C. Brown (eds), *Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485*, (London: 1961), p. 305. For the proceedings in parliament see appendix 2.

²⁰⁶ J.R. Lander, *Crown and Nobility 1450-1500*. See Chapter One: The Problems of Personality for a discussion of Lander's argument.

ultimately no solution to internal conflict.”²⁰⁷ The most significant hindrance to York’s ascendancy to power was that, “he was only a noble, part of the partisan political world over which the king was supposed to maintain a commanding impartiality.”²⁰⁸ Although he had assumed the authority of the king, when York assumed the protectorate he was faced with problems which as a result of his lack of ‘impartiality’, he could not hope to remedy. Even though Henry could hardly have been said to behave impartially towards the factions existing in his realm, he could claim the authority to supersede all class interests unlike York. Indeed this was an essential element of the king’s ability to dispense justice to *all* subjects.

York was faced with the problems of the escalation of magnate disputes. Neville and Percy relations had deteriorated again and this conflict gradually included other disaffected nobles such as the Duke of Exeter.²⁰⁹ Exeter attempted to pursue his own claim to pre-eminence in the protectorate government, resenting the growing power of York.²¹⁰ The Percies were therefore Exeter’s natural allies as the Nevilles, being allied to York had gained much from the protector; Richard Neville had been made chancellor,²¹¹ Warwick granted the Captaincy of Calais²¹² and George Neville was made Bishop of Exeter.²¹³ It is little wonder that Exeter and the Percies were concerned, prompting them to rebel against York’s authority. York successfully quashed the rebellion and incarcerated Exeter a move that only increased the nobleman’s disaffection.

²⁰⁷ C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 132.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²⁰⁹ For the deterioration of Percy and Neville relations see R.A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 736-738.

²¹⁰ For information concerning the Duke of Exeter’s rebellion see, R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* p. 142-149.

²¹¹ R.A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 726-727.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 730-731.

Additionally, York was impeded by his feud with Somerset. Throughout the protectorate, Somerset remained incarcerated in the Tower while York pushed for his impeachment. However the council did not favour this plan, "The weakness of York's position all through was that the nobility remained anxious about his treatment of Somerset and unwilling to see the latter destroyed - just as they had not allowed Somerset to destroy York earlier on."²¹⁴ The nobility's anxiousness may also be due to the circumstances surrounding the appointment of the protector. Already forced to create a political precedent in the wake of the king's madness, the council was possibly disgruntled at being used to pursue a personal quarrel. This argument is made more pertinent given Henry's open partiality towards Somerset.

The protectorate, although envisaged as a long term solution to the king's prolonged illness, proved to be of temporary benefit, "Henry VI's apparent recovery from his long illness on or soon after Christmas 1454, could not fail to have a profound effect on the protectorate and on the political and personal enmity between York and Somerset."²¹⁵ York was forced to witness the reversal of fortunes upon the king's recovery. Somerset was released from the Tower and rapidly regained his former standing in the government. This intensified the York/Somerset feud and now their political survival depended upon the destruction of the opponent,

The speed with which Somerset was restored to power was bound to alarm York, and the Nevilles also, and it was evident, to any who chose to reflect on events, that Somerset would have to seek York's elimination from politics as quickly as possibly. Somerset needed now, while the king was sane, and by

²¹³ Ibid., p. 757.

²¹⁴ C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 133.

²¹⁵ R.A. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 738.

immutable royal authority, to settle the form government should take in the event of a relapse. Only by this means could Somerset feel secure.²¹⁶

Storey has also highlighted that the real problem for the protectorate lay in Henry's recovery, "If Henry's insanity had been a tragedy, his recovery was a national disaster. While Henry was incapacitated, England had known, for the first time since he fell under Suffolk's spell, the type of government most favoured by general contemporary opinion."²¹⁷ Although feuding still existed during the protectorate there was greater stability than there had been during Henry's personal rule.

The opposition to York from the court party and the increasing prospect of another period of political isolation can be construed as the reasons behind York's claim to the throne in 1460. Henry's inability to find adequate solutions to the feuding amongst his magnates, combined with his illness and the inherent problems of the protectorate, isolated the Yorkists. There was no enthusiasm for York's claim, "But the source of this stirre rose (as we have before shewed) from Richard duke of York; for he had conceived an outrageous lust of principalitie, and never ceased to devise with himself howe and by what meanes he might compasse it..."²¹⁸ However it was the illness of Henry VI that had transformed the feud between Somerset, York and their allies, into a struggle of dynastic import and proved correct the suspicions of Margaret of Anjou's regarding the true nature of York's agenda.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, p. 155.

²¹⁷ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 159.

²¹⁸ P. Vergil, *Polydore Vergil's English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III*, H. Ellis (ed), Camden Society Old Series, vol 10, (London: 1861), p. 94.

²¹⁹ For debate concerning York's 'intentions' see, R.A. Griffiths, 'Richard Duke of York's Intentions in 1450 and the Origins of the Wars of the Roses', in *King and Country* & C. Rawcliffe, 'Richard Duke of York, the King's "Obeisant Liegeman": A New Source for the Protectorate of 1454 and 1455', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 60, 1987.

Both in France and England attempts were made to provide stability in lieu of the king's absence. These responses were based on precedents created for similar scenarios such as a minority or the king's physical absence from the kingdom. As we have seen, in France, the government was able to provide a coherent and effective response to Charles' first episode of illness in 1392. However, stability in France was jeopardised by Charles's awareness of the nature of his illness which provided the impetus for his vacillation concerning successional ordinances. This vacillation was further prompted by his being influenced by prominent members of the nobility such as Burgundy and Orléans who were seeking to consolidate their position in government as a protective measure against one another. This meant that attempts to ensure political stability was consumed by the political rivalry amongst the magnates. In England the government was able to construct an effectual response to Henry's episode of mental illness. Although there were inherent problems concerning the protectorate, as already discussed, the main threat to stability was actually the king's recovery. This rendered the political environment vulnerable to Henry's ineptitude and heralded the return of the unpopular leaders of the court party, Somerset and the Queen to the forefront of politics. Thus it was Henry's recovery that facilitated the escalation of the feuds amongst the nobility, which as in France made armed conflict inevitable. Thus the struggle for stability in both France and England culminated in devastating wars which not only impacted on the entire nation, but impacted upon the ruling dynasties themselves.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The reigns of Charles VI and Henry VI were undeniably turbulent both for the beleaguered monarchs and the realms they ruled. There are overall similarities in the consequences of their reigns on the nation at large, but the processes by which these consequences were produced differ markedly.

Concerning Charles VI, there is more recorded information regarding the episodic nature, symptomatology and trajectory of his illness. For instance it is possible to discern that Charles' episodes of mental illness were often severe and became more frequent though shorter in their duration later in his life. Conversely it is only possible to discern one episode of mental illness for Henry VI. Although this episode was prolonged, lasting eighteen months, the recorded symptoms only offer a partial view of the king's condition. It is not even possible to examine the trajectory of Henry's illness, both in the onset and recovery patterns for the known recorded episode, but also regarding the possibility of a relapse. Although some evidence suggests that Henry never fully recovered in 1454, this cannot be substantiated.

The contribution of the stresses of kingship to the mental illnesses of Charles VI and Henry VI also differs. The episodic nature of the illness of Charles VI often exacerbated his failures as a king. This is particularly evident in his perceived inability to deal with key events which destabilised the body politic, such as the assassination of Louis of Orléans in 1407. However, with regard to Henry VI, these failures to meet the required expectations of kingship often occurred regardless of illness. Examples of

Henry's failures as a king occur throughout his reign and therefore may be indicative of political ineptitude.

Nonetheless it is undeniable that the combination of mental illness and the stresses of kingship had an adverse impact on the political atmosphere of their reigns. Charles VI's vacillation regarding the provisions for stable government in his absence stemmed from his mental illness. Furthermore the contradictory state of royal policy such as concerns the papacy, was often prompted by either his mental illness, the undue influence of certain advisers or a combination of both. Moreover the inability of the king to conduct government business during periods of illness created a power vacuum which prominent princes of the blood such as Burgundy and Orléans sought to exploit. What is equally discernible is that although tensions subside during periods when Charles is considered sane, an undercurrent of tension remains. Additionally Charles demonstrates defective judgement and the ability to be easily influenced even during these periods, thereby suggesting that Charles never fully recovered from his bouts of mental illness. This sequence resulted in an increase in factionalism, a civil war, the renowned invasion of Henry V and the disinheritance of the Valois dauphin in favour of a Lancastrian dual monarchy.

Although it is also impossible to determine whether Henry VI actually recovered from his period of mental illness, certainly it was his recovery rather than the illness itself that caused an escalation in tension and conflict. Prior to Henry's mental illness it can be argued that his political ineptitude was responsible for the increase in factionalism. However during the period of his illness, the government was able to provide a solution that potentially provided the greatest stability. After Henry's recovery in 1454 the

situation reversed resulting in a return to inept governance. This culminated in the civil war known as the Wars of the Roses, the disinheritation of the Lancastrian Prince of Wales, the overthrow of the House of Lancaster and the succession of the House of York.

Consequently potential further research should perhaps focus less on the illnesses of these monarchs in isolation, rather than on what they elucidate about forms of the Medieval government. The failures of the French and English monarchies, in the face of the unprecedented event of the king's mental illness may serve more to highlight the inadequacies and inflexibility of Medieval government rather than on the personalities and illnesses of the king's themselves.

Appendices

Appendix 1

From A.D. Thomas & I.D. Thornley (ed), *The Great Chronicle of London*, Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1985, p. 109-115.

* The articles and appoyntementes of the pees betwene the Reaumes of Englonde and Fraunce

Herry by the grace of god kyng of Englonde heire and Regent of Fraunce lord of Irelande to perpetuel mynde to all cristen poeple and all tho that been under oure obeyssaunce We notifie and declare. that though ther hath been here afore diverse tretz betwene the moost the excellent prince Charles oure Fadir of Fraunce and his progenytours for the pees to be hadde / betwene two Reaumes of Fraunce and Englonde the which here before have borne no frute We considering the grete harmys the which hath not oonly falle betwene these two Reaumes for the grete dyvysion that hath been betwene them But to all holy Chirche We have take a trete with oure said Fader In which trete betwixt oure forsaid Fader and us it is concluded and accorded in the fourme after the maner that foloweth.

First it is accorded betwixt oure fader and us that for as moche as by the bonde of matrimonye made for the good of the peas betwene us and oure moost dere and belovyd kateryne doughter of oure said Fader and of oure moost dere moder Isabell his wyfe ¶The same Charles and Isabell been made Fader and moder Therefore hem as oure fader and moder we shall have and worship As it fitteth and semeth so worthy a prince and princesse to be worshipped principally before all other temporall persones of the worlde

Also we shall not distrouble disesen or letten oure fader aforesaid But that he holde and possede as longe as he leveth as he holdeth and possedeth atte this tyme the Croune and the dignyte Roiall of Fraunce and Rentes and profites of the same of the sustenaunce of his estate and charges of the Reaume ¶And oure forsaid moder also holde as longe as she lyveth the astate and dignyte of quene after the matter of the same Reaume with covenable and convenient parte of the said Rentes and profites

Also that the forsaid kateryne shall take and have dower in / oure Reaume of Englonde as quenes of Englonde as quenes of Englonde here afore were wonte forto take and have that is to sey to the somme of fourty thousand scutes of the which two algates shall be worthe a noble englyssh.

Also that be weyes maners and meenes that we may w'oute transgression or offence of othe made by us For to kepe the lawes Custumes usages and rightes of oure said Reaume of Englonde shall done oure labour and pursue that the saide kateryne also sone as it may be done be made sure forto take and forto have in oure said Reaume of Englonde fro the tyme of oure dethe the said dower of fourty thousand scutes yerly of the which tweyne algates shall be worthe a noble englyssh

Also yf it hadde the said keteryne ovyr lyve us she shall take and have in the Reaume of Fraunce inmedyatyly from the tyme of oure dethe dower to the somme of xx M frankys yerely of and upon the landys placis and lordshippes that helde and hadde Blaunche sumtyme wyfe of Phylip Besaele to oure said fader

Also that anone after the dethe of oure said fader and from thens forward the Coroune and the Reaume of Fraunce w' all the Rightes and appurtenaunces shull remayne and abide to us and of oure heirs for evyrmore

And for asmuch as oure said fader is withholden w' diverse seeknesse in such as he may not tend in his owne persone forto dispose for the nedes of the forsaid Reaume of Fraunce therfore during the lyfe of oure said fader the facultez and / excercyse of the gouvernaunce and disposicion of the good pulique and comon profite of the said Reaume of Fraunce with counseill and nobles and wyse men of the same Reaume of Fraunce shull be and abyde to us So that from hens forward we mowe gouverne the same Reaume by us

Also by other that wyten the counseill of the said nobles that we liketh or luste forto depute the which facultees and excercyse of gouvernaunce thus being toward us we shall labour and purpose us spedefully diligently and truly to that that may be and oweth forto be to the worship of god and of oure said Fader and moder And also to the comon good of the said Reaume And that Reaume with the counseill and helpe of the worthy grete and nobles of the same Reaume forto be defended peased and gouverned after that right and equitye wole

Also that we to oure power shall do the court of the parliament of Fraunce be kept and observed in his auctorite and superiorite and in all that is doon to it in all maner of places that now or in tyme comyng is or shall be subject to oure said fader

Also we to oure power shull defende and helpe all and every peres noble Citees Tounes Cominaltees and singler persones now or in tyme comyng subjectes to oure fader in here rightes custumes pryvyles fredoms and Fraunchises longyng or due to hem in all maner of places now or in tyme commyng subject to oure fader

Also we diligently and truly shull travayle to oure power / and do that Justice be admynystred and done in the same Reaume of Fraunce after the lawes custumes and Rightes of the same Reaume Without personelx excepcion And that we shall kepe and holde the subjectes of the same Reaume in tranquylite and peas And to oure power we shall defended hem ageynst all maner of violence and oppression

Also we to oure power shull pursue and do that able persones and profitable been taken to the officers aswell of Justices and other offices longyng to the governaunce of the demaynes and of other offices in the said Reaume of Fraunce for the good Right and pesyble of the same And that they be such persones that after the lawes and the Rightes

of the same Reaume And for the utilite and profite of oure said fader and that the forsaid Reaume oweth to be taken and depute to the same offices

Also that we to oure power also sone as it may commodiously be done shull travayle forto putte into the obedience of oure said fader all maner of Citees tounes Castels places Cuntrees and persones withyn the Reaume of Fraunce inobedient and Rebelles to oure said fader holdyng which had been called Dolphyn or armynak

Also that we mowe the more commodiously surely and frely done excercise and fulfille thise thinges aforesaid It is accorded that worthy grete nobles and astates of the same Reaume of Fraunce aswell spirituelx as temporelx And also Citees notables and Cominaltees Citezeins and Burgeys of / tounes of the Reaume of Fraunce that been obeissant atte this tyme to oure said fader shull make these others that folowen

First to us bering the faculte and excercise of disposicion and governaunce of the forsaid comon profite to oure hestes and commaundementes they shull mekely and obediently obeie and entende in all maner of thing consernyng the excercise of governaunce of the same Reaume

Also that the worthy grete nobles and astates of the said Reaume as well spirituelx as temporelx and also Citees and notable Cominaltees and Citezeins and Burgeys of the same Reaume and all maner of thinges well and truly shull kepe and to here power shull do kepe of all somoche as to hem longeth or to ony of hem all tho thinges that been appoynted and accorded betwene oure forsaid fader and moder and us with the counseill of hem whom us lyst to clepe to

Also that contynuelly from the dethe and after the dethe of oure said fader Charles they shull be oure trewe liege men and oure heires ¶ And they shull resceyve and admytte us for here liege and souverain and verrey kyng of Fraunce And for such obeye withoute opposition contradiccion or dyfficulte And [as] that they been to oure forsaid Fader during his lyfe Nevyr after this Reaume of Fraunce shall obey to a man as kyng or Regent of Fraunce, but to us and oure heires

Also they shull nought be in counsell or helpe or assent that we lese lyfe of lymme or be y take with evyll takyng Or that we suffre harme or dyminicion in persone astate worship or goodes But yf they knowe ony such thing forto be caste / or ymagyned ageynst us they shull lette it to here power and they shull done us to wetyn therof as hastely as they may by hem self by message or by lettres

Also that all maner of consequestes that shuld be made be us of Fraunce upon the said inobedientes oute of the Duche of Normandie shull be doon to the profite of oure said fader And that to oure power we shall do that all maner londes and lordeshippes that been in the places so forto be conquered longyng to persones obeying to oure said fader Which shul swere forto kepe this present accorde shull be restored to the same persones to whom they longe to

Also that all maner persones of holy Chirche beneficed in the Duchie of Normandie or any other places in the Reaume of Fraunce subject to us obedient to oure fader and favouryng the partie of the Dukes of Burgoyne the which shull swere to kepe this present accorde shull rejoyse peasybly here benefices of holy Chirche in the Duchie of Normandie or in any other places next aforesaid

Also like wyse all maner of persones of holy Chirche obedient to us and beneficed in the Reaume of Fraunce and places subject to oure fader that shall swere to kepe this present accord shull rejoyse peasybly here benefices of holy chirche in places next abovesaid

Also that all maner of Chirches Unyversitees and Studyes generall and also Colleges of studyers and other Colleges of holy Chirche beyng in places nowe or in tyme comyng subject to oure fader or in the Duchie of Normandie or other / places in the Reaume of Fraunce subject to us shull rejoisen here rightes possessions rentes perogatyves and libertees and Fraunchises longyng or due to them in any maner of wyse in the said Reaume of Fraunce Savyng the Right of the Coroune of Fraunce and of every other persone

Also that by goddes helpe whan it happeth us to come to the Coroune of Fraunce the Duchie of Normandie and all other places conquered by us in the Reaume of Fraunce shull bowe under the commaundement obeisaunce and monarchye of the Coroune of Fraunce

Also that we shull enforce us and done [to] oure power that recompense be ymade be oure said fader w'out dymynyction of the Coroune of Fraunce to persones obeyng to hym and favouryng to that partie that is said Burgoyne to whom longeth londes lordshippes Rentes or possessions in the said Duchie of Normandie or other places in the Reaume of Fraunce conquered by us hydertoward geven by us in places and landys getyn orto begetyn and overcom in the name of oure said fader upon Rebelles and inobedients to hym ¶ And yf it so be that such maner recompence be not made to the said persones be the lyfe of oure said fader We shall make that recompence in such maner of places and goodes whanne it happeth by goddes grace to come to the Coroune of Fraunce ¶ And yf it so be that the londes lordshippes rentes or possessions the which longeth to such maner in the said Duchie and places be not yoven by us the same persones shull be restored to theym without any delay /

Also during the lyfe of oure said fader in all places nowe or in tyme comyng subject to hym, lettres of comune Justice and also grauntes of offices and yiftes pardons or remissions and pryvyleges shull be writen and procede under the name and the seal of oure said fader ¶ And for asmoche as somme singler caas mat falle that mowe not be forseen by mannes wytte In the which it myght be necessarie and behovefull that we do write oure lettres in such maner caas yf any happe for the good and surete of oure said fader and for the governaunce that longeth to us as is beforesaid And forto escewen perilles that other wyse myght falle yn subject to oure said fader, to write oure lettres Be

the which we shull commaund charge and defende after the nature and qualite of the nede in oure faders behalve and oures as Regent of Fraunce

Also that during oure fadirs lyfe we shull not nempne ne wryte us kyng of Fraunce But utterly we shull absteyne us fro that name as longe as oure fadir lyveth

Also that oure said fadir during his lyfe shall nempne calle and write us in Frenssh on this maner **Nostre treschier Fitz henry Roy oengleterre hereterere de Fraunce** and in latyn in this maner **Precarissimus filius noster henricus Rer Anglie et heres Francie**

Also that we shull putte none impositiouns or exaccions or do putte the subjectes of oure said fader withoute cause resonable and necessarie ne other wyse than comyn good of the Reaume of Fraunce and after the saying and askyng of the lawes custumes resonables and approved of the same Reaume/

Also that we shull travayle [to] oure power to the affect and to the avys and to the assente of three astates of eyther of the Reaumes of Fraunce and of Englund all maner obstacles done away in this partie that been ordeyned and provyded that fro the tyme that we or any of oure heires come to the Coroune of Fraunce bothe the corounes that is to say of Fraunce and of Englund perpetuely be no gedre in oon and in the same persone that is to say from oure fadre lyfe And from thens terme of oure lyfe And from thens forward in the persones of oure heires that shall been oon after another ¶ And that boothe Reaumes shall be governed fro that we or any of oure heires come to the same not severally under diverse kynges in oon tyme but under that same persone which for the tyme shall be kyng of bothe Reaumes and souverain lord as it is beforesaid keeping nevyrthelees in all manere other thinges to eyther of the same Reaumes here Rightes libertees custumes usages and lawes nought makynge subject in any maner of wyse oon of the same Reaumes to that other or puttyng or submyttyng the Rightes lawes custumes and usages of that oon of the same Roialmes [to] the Rightes lawes or usages of that other

Also that hens forward perpetually shall be stille reste and all maner of wyse shall cese all maner of discenciouns hates rauncours envies and werres betwene the same Reaumes of Fraunce and Englund And the peple of the same Reaumes drwayng to accorde of the same pees

And there shall be fro hens forward for evyrmore and shall folowen pees and tranquyllyte and good accorde and comon affeccion and stabill frenship betwene the same Reaumes / and here subjectes beforesaid And the same Reaumes shall kepe hem self with here counsaill helpes and comon assistance ageyns all maner of men that enforce hem forto done or to ymagyne wronges harmes diseses or grevaunce to theym or to eyther of theym ¶ And they shall be conversaunt and marchaundisen frely and surely to gydre paying to custome and devoryrys due and accustomed ¶ Also they shall be conversaunt ¶ Also that all tho confidered and allied of oure said fader and the Reaume of Fraunce aforesaid And also oure confideratys and of the Reaume of Englund aforesaid the which in viij monthes from the tyme of this accorde of pees Is notified to theym [we] wole declare by [oure]

lettres that they wole drawe to this accorde and wole be comprehended under the tretes and accord of this pees Savyng natheles eyther of the same Corounes And also all maner accions Rightes and remedies that longen to oure said fader and his subjectes and to us and to oure subjectes ageyn such maner of allies and confyderatys

Also neyther oure fader neyther oure brother the Duke of Burgoyne shall begynne ne make with Charles Cheryng hym self for the Dolphyn of vyennes ony trete or pees or accord but of counsail and assent of alle and yche of us three or of other thre astates of eyther of the said Reaumes above nempned

Also that we with assente of oure said brother of Burgoyne and other of the nobles of the Reaume of Fraunce the which therto owen to be called shull ordeyne for the governaunce of oure said fadir sekyrly lovyngly and honestly after the askyng of his Roial astate and dignyte by the maner that / shall be to the worship of god and of oure fader And the Reaume of Fraunce

Also all maner of persones that shall be aboute oure said fader to done hym personall service nought oonly in office but in all other services aswell the nobles gentils as other shall be soch as hathe be borne in the Reaume of Fraunce or in places longyng of Fraunce good wyse true and able to that forsaid service ¶And oure said fader shall dwelle in places notable of his obedience and nowere ellys

Wherfore we charge and commaund oure said lieges and subjectes and other beyng under oure obedience that they kepe and do kepe in all that longeth to hem this accorde and pees after the fourme and maner as it is accorded And that they attempte in no maner wyse thing that may be prejudice or contrarie to the same accorde and pees upon payne of lyfe and lymme and all that they may forfeite agaynst us

And thanne after that the feste and the solempnyte of the marriage was done the kyng conquered mony tounes and castels in Normandie ¶And the kyng leyde siege to Mylon sur Seyne *att whyche sege werre present ye kyng off england ye ffrenche kyng ye kyng of scottes ye qwenes off england and France iij dukes & ye prince off orange* during which siege the Maire and the Shreves of london were chosen that is to say

Appendix 2

From S.B. Chrimes & A.L. Brown (eds), *Select Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485*, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1961, p. 305-309.

*** Acceptance by Richard, Duke of York, of Appointment as Protector, on Conditions, 13-22 November, 1455.**

31. Memorandum, that the xiii day of the said moneth of Novembre it was shewed to the duke of York, the kynges lieutenaunt in this present parlement, and to the lordes spirituall and temporell, by the mouthe of Burley accompanied with notable nombre of the Communes in name of all the Communes, that howe it had liked the kynges highnesse for certayn causes hym moevyng to assigne the said duk of York to be his lieutenaunt in this present parlement, and to procede in matiers of parliament, as in the kynges letters theruppon made and late radde before the said Communes it is playnly conteyned, and that the said duke of York had taken uppon hym so to procede. Wherefore it was thought by theym that were comen for the communes of this lande that if for suche causes the kyng herafter myght not entende to the proteccion and defence of this lande, that it shuld like the kyng by thadvis of his said lieutenaunt and the lordes to ordeigne and purveye suche an hable persone as shuld mowe entende to the defence and proteccion of the said lande, and this to be doon as sone as it myght be, and they to have knowelege therof, to that entent that they myght sende to theym for whom they were comen to this present parlement knowelege who shuld be protectour and defensour of this lande, and to whom they shuld mowe have recours to sue for remedie of injuries and wronges done to theym. And also where there ben grete and grevous riotes doon in the weste countrey betwene therle of Devonshire and the lord Boneville, by the whiche som men have be murdred, som robbed, and children and wymen taken, it is thought that if suche protectour and defensour were had, that suche riotes and injuries shuld be souner punysshed, justice largely ministred, and the lawe more duely to procede. Wherefore it myght lyke the said lieutenaunte and all the lordes to be goode meanes unto the kynges highnesse that suche a persone myght be purveide fore and had. And theruppon it was answered by the archebisshop of Caunterbury, chaunceler of Englund, that the said lieutenaunt and all the lordes wolde comon and delibere uppon their desire, and they shuld have suche aunswere as shuld be pleasyng to God and profite to the land.

[On 15 November Burley accompanied by a great number of the Commons again came before the lords and repeated his request.]

33. Item, this same day, after the voidyng of the said Burley and of theym accompanied with hym out of the parliament chambre, this question was axed by the said chaunceler of the lordes, seying, my lordes for asmoche as the Communes have made twies their desire and request, and that it is understoud that they woll not further procede in matiers of parliament to the tyme that they have answere of their desire and request, what is thought to your wysdomes that shuld be done in this behalfe? To the whiche question it was aunswere by all the lordes, that for the causes above meoved by the said Communes, it were right expedient and behovefull that suche a protector and defensor

shuld be had as the Communes desired. And than the said chaunceler seide to all the lordes, sith it is expedient and behovefull that suche protector and defensor shuld be had, asked who that persone shuld be, and that it shuld lyke theym to name hym. And there it was aggreed by all the lordes spirituelx and temporelx, every lord severally yevyng his voice and assent, considered the grete noblenesse, sadnesse, and wysdome of the duc of York, the sad governaunce and polletique rule had in this lande the tyme that he was last protectour and defensour of the land, that he shuld nowe take the charge uppon hym ayen, afre semblable presidences as he had it before; to the whiche the said duc of York aunswered, praiyng and desiryng all the lordes that for asmoche as he knewe well that he was no persone hable, neithir in wisdom ne in governaunce, to take so grete and chargefull occupacion uppon hym, to name and take a nothir persone more able to so grete charge than he was, and be fully therof to be discharged. The whiche desire the lordes in no wyse wold admitte. And than the said duc of York seyde that if so were that he shuld nedes take that occupacion uppon hym, but onely for the grete trust that he had in the lordes that he wuld have of theym in that behalfe supportacion, good assistance, counseill, and aide, and also certeyn protestacions, and that he myght theruppon be advised.

[On Monday, 17 November, Burley accompanied by a great number of the Commons again came before the lords and repeated his request more strongly, telling of further news of disorder in the west country, and suggesting that since Christmas was approaching parliament might be prorogued, adjourned, or dissolved.]

35. Item, this same day, the said chaunceler, by thassent of the said lieutenaunt and all the lordes, shewed and declared unto the Communes beyng in their house accustomed, that where as the said Communes had made dyverse desires and requestes to the said lordes to be good meanes to the kyng our soverayn lord, that, for causes meoved by theym, ther myght be had a protectour and defensour of this land, the kyng our said soveraigne lord, by thadvis and assent of his lordes spirituell and temporell beyng in this present parliament, had named and desired the duc of York to be protectour and defensour of this land, the said lordes trustyng verily that he wuld take it uppon hym. And that as for the subduyng and resistance of the grete riottes and inconveniences that were done and committed, as it is seide, in the west cuntry, the said lieutenaunt and all the lordes have be and wull be as diligent, as desirous, and as coragious to the subduyng and resistance therof as they can or may be, and thonked the Communes of their grete diligences and desires made by theym in that behalfe. And as for the adjornyng, prorogyng, or dissolvynge of this parliament, the said lieutenaunt by thadvis of all the lordes wull procede theryn as the case shall require and be most behovefull and expedient.

[On 17 November the duke of York delivered certain articles in parliament. He protested his insufficiency for the task and asked that certain things be enacted by the authority of parliament.]

I. First, where that afre request made unto you by the Commons beyng in this present parliament to be moyen unto the kynges highnesse to ordeyne and name a persone to be protectour and defensour of this lande, it lyked you of your self and of your free and mere

disposicion to desire, name, and calle me to the said name and charge; and that of eny presumption of my self I ne take theym uppon, me but onely of thobeisaunce that Y awe to do, to the kyng our most dradde soverain lord, and to you as the parage of this lande, the lordes spirituelx and temporelx beyng in this present parliament, takyng uppon you the exercise of his auctorite for suche urgent, necessary, and resonable causes as move you so to take uppon you, for the good and honour of his highnesse, the politique and restfull rule and governance of this his lande, and thobservacion and entreteygnyng of his lawes and peas, wheryn restith the joy, consolacion, and suretie of you and all his liege people, and of my self specially, whiche with Goddes grace entende not to take, ner not wull presume to take uppon my self to procede to the execution or determinacion of eny thyng touchyng or concernyng thestate, honoure, or dignite of our said soverain lord, either els the seid politique rule and governance, without your advis and assent in the parlement, eithir els thadvis and assent of thaym that it shall please the kynges highnesse to name of his prive Conseill, to whoos advis, conseil, and assent I wull obey and applie my self as Y knowe it accordeth to my duete to do.

Responsio. It is agreed. . . .

[The duke asked also for a definition of his powers; for the assistance of the lords; for the appointment of counsellors, and for payment to be made to them to ensure their attendance; for his own salary, and for the payment of the salary due to him from the time he was last protector. He agreed to accept the same powers as on his previous protectorate, and his other requests were accepted.]

39. [Considering the requests of the Commons] . . . idem dominus noster rex . . . decimo nono die Novembris, anno regni sui tricesimo quarto, de industria et circumspeccione carissimi consanguinei sui Ricardi, ducis Eboraci, plenarie confidens, de avisamento et assensu dominorum tam spiritualium quam temporalium in parlamento predicto existentium, necnon de assensu communitatis predictae in eodem parlamento existentis, ordinavit et constituit dictum consanguinum suum regni sui et ecclesie Anglicane predictorum protectorem et defensorem ac consiliarium ipsius domini regis principalem; et quod ipse dux ejusdem regni protector et defensor ac ipsius domini regis principalis consiliarius sit et nominetur quousque idem consanguineus ipsius domini regis de occupacione sive onere et nomine hujusmodi, per prefatum dominum regem in parlamento, de avisamento et assensu dominorum spiritualium et temporalium in parlamento existentium, exoneretur. Auctoritate tamen dicti ducis quo ad exercitium et occupacionem oneris protectoris et defensoris predicti omnino cessante cum sive quando Edwardum dicti domini regis filium primogenitum contigerit ad annos discrecionis pervenire, si idem Edwardus onus protectoris et defensoris predicti super se adtune assumere voluerit. [The text of the letters-patent for the duke then follow.]

40. [The powers of the protector are a repetition of those given to him in 1454.]

41. The xxii day of Novembre, the yere of oure seid soverayne lord xxxiiii, the moost Cristen prince the kyng oure moost drad soverayne lord, at his paleys of Westminster, remembryng that to the politique governaunce and restfull reule of this his realme apperteneth grete diligence and actuell laboure, the which is to his moost noble persone full tedious and grete to suffre and bere. Also that every prince must of verray necessitee have counsaillers to helpe hym in his charges, to whome he muste trust and leene. For thees causes and other such as moeve his high wisdom, consideryng that God hath

endued such as been of his Counsaill with grete wisdom, cunnyng, and experience, and knowe the direccion to be had moost expedient for the sadde and politique reule of this his land, whoos trouthes, love, and good zeale that they bere to his welfare, suertee of his high astate and roiall persone, been to hym approved and knowen, openyng his gracious disposicion, ordeyned and graunted that his Counsaill shuld provyde, commyne, ordeyne, spede, and conclude all such matiers as touche and concerne the good and politique rule and governaunce of this his land and lawes therof, and directe thayme as it shalbe thought to their wisdomes and discrecions behovefull and expedient; soo alwaye that in all such matiers as touchen the honour, wurship and suertee of his moost noble persone, they shall late his hignes have knowelech what direccion they take in theym; desiryng his said Counsaill hertely, for the wele and ease of his said persone, and kepyng and beryng up his roiall astate, to take this his wille and ordenaunce upon thaym. The which lordes protestyng that the high prerogative, preemynence, and auctorite of his mageste roiall, and also the soverauntee of thaym and all this lande, is, and alwey mot reste and shall reste in his moost excellent persone, offre thayme of humble obeissaunce to put thaym in as grete diligence and devoir, to doo all that that mowe preferre or avaunce the said high prerogatyve, preemynence, and auctorite of his moost excellence, and also his high regalie, and honorable astate and welfare, and the felicitee and suertee of his moost noble persone, and also to the politique reule and governaunce of his lande, and the good publique, reste, and tranquillite of his subgettes, as ever did eny counsaillers or subgettes to their moost drad soverayne lord, and therunto at all tymes to be redy, not sparyng therfore at eny tyme that it shall nede to putte their bodies in jeopardie.

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