

# A Bastard and a Changeling? England's Edward of Westminster and Delayed Childbirth

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At first glance, Edward of Westminster (1453–1471) hardly seems to be an unexpected heir. The only child of England's King Henry VI (r. 1422–1461, 1470–1471) and Margaret of Anjou, this prince of the blood without siblings would seem to be an obvious, very much expected heir. Yet Edward was not entirely anticipated—his parents had been married for eight childless years before his arrival. Opponents of the royal family took advantage of this bout of infertility and, relying largely on slanders to the queen's sexual morality, created a narrative in which Edward was not a true royal, which helped support his eventual disinheritation.<sup>1</sup>

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## REPRODUCTIVE DIFFICULTIES

Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou married in April 1445 (at ages twenty-three and fifteen, respectively). At that time, the ranks of the English royal family were especially thin. Henry VI had no full-siblings who were eligible to succeed him. His four uncles (only one of whom survived in 1445), had not produced a single legitimate child. The succession became murky after Henry's final surviving uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, died without legitimate issue in February 1447. This lack of a second generation "heightened public sensitivity" to Margaret's reproductive role.<sup>2</sup> Possible heirs included Richard, Duke of York and Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, both distant cousins of the king.<sup>3</sup> Henry's conspicuous lack of a clear successor until his son's birth in 1453 caused tension among certain high-ranking nobles, as the king tended to promote the Beauforts over York, which antagonized the duke.<sup>4</sup> As will be seen, ultimately, Edward's birth did little to solve this problem.

Henry and Margaret spent much of their time together in the early days of their marriage, which should have facilitated conception.<sup>5</sup> When an heir was not forthcoming, some of their subjects complained—and such words were brought to the attention of the authorities. Draper John Bago, while imprisoned in London, claimed that King Henry's "rule is naught" because the Bishop of Salisbury and the Duke of Suffolk directed everything.<sup>6</sup> And when,

our said sovereign lord the king would have his sport with our sovereign lady the queen, that then the said bishop of Salisbury and other more that were about our said sovereign lord the king counseled him that he should not come neigh her the which is cause that she is not conceived and so the land is devoid of a prince.<sup>7</sup>

Henry allowed himself to be ruled by others, displaying insufficient sexual and manly vigor, and his childlessness was a physical manifestation of that flaw.<sup>8</sup>

In 1448, Thomas Gate, a felon in jail at Canterbury, also slandered the monarchs:

Our Queen was not able to be Queen of England but, and he were a peer of or a lord of this realm, he would be one of them that should help to put

her down for because that she bears no child, and because that we have no prince in this land.<sup>9</sup>

Gate's suggestion that the queen should be "put down" (presumably repudiated) for this failure highlighted the pressure for the royal couple to make reality match expectations.

By 1450, some English subjects had altered their expectations—or at least wanted to prepare for the couple's continued childlessness. In the Parliament of that year, Thomas Yonge presented a petition that "because the king still did not have a child," he should nominate the Duke of York as heir apparent in order to keep the realm secure. Yonge's suggestion was not appreciated: the king and the lords refused consent, Parliament was dissolved, and Yonge was afterwards imprisoned in the Tower of London.<sup>10</sup> Although Yonge's suggestion was insulting to the royal couple and politically motivated (to benefit the Duke of York), it also revealed that some people thought it possible the couple would never have a child after five already-childless years of marriage.<sup>11</sup>

Margaret of Anjou planned for the future in a different way, through repeated attempts to remedy her childlessness via devotional practices. Early in her reign, Margaret made a couple of visits to Thomas Becket's shrine at Canterbury, which had connections with fertility and childbirth; Becket was venerated for helping infertile women conceive and easing the travails of women in childbirth on occasion.<sup>12</sup> Margaret heard mass at Becket's shrine on September 20, 1446 and, on the vigil and day of Michaelmas of the following year (September 28–29, 1447), she went to Canterbury for pilgrimage on foot.<sup>13</sup> Although Margaret's visits served several purposes (including veneration of St. Michael the Archangel in 1447), her desire for a child and the assistance these saints could provide were probably never far from her mind.

On at least two occasions, Margaret sought the assistance of Our Lady of Walsingham, the shrine to the Virgin Mary that was associated with the conception and birth of children. Margaret went on a pilgrimage to Our Lady, as noted in a letter from Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, who met Margaret after she had visited: "it pleased there unto in your coming from that blessed, gracious and devout pilgrimage of our lady of Walsingham to suffer the coming of my simple person."<sup>14</sup> In January 1453, Margaret offered a richly bejeweled golden tablet worth £29 as a New Year's gift to Our Lady of Walsingham.<sup>15</sup> The tablet had

borders made of garnets “with ten metal-set pearls, five sapphires and five balas rubies with an angel in the middle,” accented with a “good” sapphire and “holding a cross made of garnets, one ruby, and nine pearls from the east.” This was Margaret’s most expensive gift after her present to the king, reflecting the importance of fertility and its high priority.<sup>16</sup>

### A LEGITIMATE HEIR? 1453–1471

Margaret’s effort paid off. In the early months of 1453, she became pregnant. Henry VI was delighted by the news: he gave Richard Tunstall, an esquire of the body, an annuity of £40 because Richard “gave us the first comforting report and news that our most entirely beloved wife the queen was with child, to our most singular consolation, and a great joy and comfort to all our true liege people.”<sup>17</sup> The king also purchased an expensive jewel called a “demi cent,” which was delivered “unto our most dear and most entirely beloved wife the queen, while she was with child with our first begotten son the prince.”<sup>18</sup> Within the court, the queen’s pregnancy was thus well publicized and greeted with joy. By August of 1453, word was spreading outside court about Margaret’s pregnancy. John Tanner, writing to the prior of Christ Church Canterbury, stated that Jakys Haute, whose spouse was at court, had heard from his wife that the queen was “quick with child.”<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, Henry VI became mentally ill at the beginning of August 1453, as Margaret entered the eighth month of her pregnancy, and did not recover until around Christmas 1454.<sup>20</sup> While Henry was ill and unresponsive to outside stimuli, Margaret gave birth to their son on October 13, 1453 and nurtured him through his first fourteen months of life. *Bale’s Chronicle* recalled that, in honor of the birth, church bells were everywhere rung and the “Te Deum” solemnly sung.<sup>21</sup> Other chroniclers simply recorded the prince’s birth in a matter-of-fact way. *The Great Chronicle of London* stated that Margaret gave birth to Edward, while the *Chronicle of London* noted the queen “was delivered of a fair Prince.”<sup>22</sup> These unadorned comments on the prince’s birth revealed that nothing was perceived to be amiss; Margaret had given birth and her son Edward was accepted as Henry’s heir.

Letters from shortly after the prince’s birth also demonstrated ready acceptance of Edward’s legitimacy, despite the unfortunate

circumstances engendered by prolonged infertility and his father's illness. In January 1454 John Stodeley noted in his newsletter that the Duke of Buckingham, and then the queen herself, took the infant prince and presented him to Henry VI, but the king was still too ill to respond.<sup>23</sup> Henry's failure to recognize, or even acknowledge, his son and heir was treated as a symptom of the king's illness and not as a hint that the prince was illegitimate. Later, William Worcester wrote to John Paston I about a ceremony in Westminster, on Pentecost Sunday 1454, in which young Edward was invested as Prince of Wales. This important event was attended by the Chancellor, the Duke of Buckingham, numerous other lords, and the queen, but Henry VI was not present, presumably on account of his illness.<sup>24</sup> Yet another opportunity had passed for the king to acknowledge his son, but it cast no shadow over the proceedings.<sup>25</sup> Henry finally met his son in early 1455, when the boy was already over a year old. As Edmund Clere, writing in January 1455 to John Paston I, told it, Margaret had presented their son to the king, who "held up his hands and thanked God. And he said he never knew him till that time, nor knew what was said to him."<sup>26</sup> Despite Henry's illness at the time of Edward's birth, it seems that people were prepared to believe the prince was the genuine son of Henry and Margaret. Neither the long eight-year wait for an heir nor Henry's long inability to recognize his own son initially roused any suspicions.

But the birth of the prince after such a long wait did not ease the tense political situation. During Henry's illness, Richard, Duke of York served as Protector of the Realm despite the claims of Margaret on behalf of her infant son. When York was relieved of his post and politically sidelined after Henry's recovery, the duke took up arms at the first battle of St. Albans in May 1455, which traditionally marks the beginning of the series of armed conflicts now known as the Wars of the Roses (1455–1485). St. Albans was a Yorkist victory, and the Duke of York was appointed as Protector, serving until February 1456. For the rest of Henry's reign, hostilities with York simmered just beneath the surface, occasionally spawning a pitched battle.

By 1456 rumors began circulating that Prince Edward was illegitimate—almost certainly Yorkist slander designed to curry support for the prince's disinheritance.<sup>27</sup> On February 23, 1456 John Helton, an apprentice at Gray's Inn, was executed for creating bills that said Prince Edward was not the queen's son.<sup>28</sup> This was the first recorded instance

of such rumors, and the bills accused the prince of being a changeling (the child of another couple who was brought into the royal family either after the queen had a stillbirth or as the result of a false pregnancy).<sup>29</sup> Such rumors not only besmirched the prince's legitimacy but also discredited the queen. Margaret was accused either of having faked her pregnancy or trying to cover up a stillbirth; either way, the queen was alleged to have tried to pass off a random boy as the legitimate prince. Margaret's eight-year period of childlessness probably did nothing to help her dispel such slander.

In the mid-1450s, actions taken by the king's government indicated that rumors about the prince's birth had spread to people below the highest ranks. In March 1457 the London common council "warned the city companies not to meddle in affairs touching the king, queen or prince, but to curb their tongues and not utter any unseemly, scandalous or disgraceful words at their peril."<sup>30</sup> In October 1457, a commission was sent into Norfolk to root out any treasons and slanders relating to the king, queen, or prince; this legal body was also probably concerned with the prince's legitimacy.<sup>31</sup> Attempts by the king, queen, and their councilors to stop any scurrilous gossip pertaining to Prince Edward indicated not only worry on their part but also that such slurs had reached "the people," rather than simply political elites and learned chroniclers.

One chronicle declared in 1459, "The queen was defamed and slandered that he that was called prince was not her son but a bastard gotten in adultery."<sup>32</sup> This statement contained two rumors: Prince Edward was a changeling *and* a bastard. Both accusations portrayed Margaret as desperate to keep the Lancastrian dynasty alive, going so far as to trick the country (and possibly even her husband) into accepting a bastard child as the prince. As mentioned before, such rumors insulted Margaret's fertility: the queen would have had no need for a changeling if she could have more easily become pregnant or given birth to a living child. This rumor also added insult to injury: it suggested that the prince was not only not Margaret's child but someone's bastard at that.

The rumors of illegitimacy even spread overseas. Newsletters from July 1460, now found in the archives in Milan, reported that "they [probably the magnates or Parliament] will pass over the king's son, as they are beginning already to say that he is not the king's son."<sup>33</sup> This report revealed that gossip about the prince was rife and seemingly

enough people were willing to entertain the notion of his illegitimacy that they might pass him over in the succession.<sup>34</sup> In a letter from March 27, 1461, Prospero di Camulio, Milanese ambassador to France, passed on rumors that Henry VI had resigned his crown to his son, although “they say his Majesty remarked at another time, that he must be the son of the Holy Spirit, etc., but these may only be the words of common fanatics, such as they have at present in that island.”<sup>35</sup> Again, the rumors asserted that Prince Edward was not the son of Henry VI, but rather the product of Margaret’s adultery. The rumors further suggested Henry was incapable of fatherhood, perhaps in reference to the king’s incapacity when his son was born or to concerns about his manliness.<sup>36</sup>

These rumors were, no doubt, spurred by the competition for the throne between the York and Lancastrian factions. It is entirely possible that partisans of the Duke of York would have impugned the legitimacy of any child of Margaret and Henry, no matter when he was born. But the couple’s prolonged, and publicly noted, period of infertility lent credence to these claims. Medical literature argued that prostitutes and common (overly sexually active) women were unable to conceive either because their wombs were closed or were too slippery because of the buildup of male seed, which prevented any seed from “catching” in the uterus for a pregnancy.<sup>37</sup> In a sampling of medieval thinkers, this idea crops up multiple times. According to William of Conches, philosopher and tutor to the young Henry II of England, because of “her frequent coition, therefore, a prostitute’s womb is covered with slime, and the hairs by which the womb ought to detain the sperm are wholly covered by slime; thus, her womb immediately releases whatever it receives as oiled marble would do.”<sup>38</sup> Albert the Great noted that too much sex was not conducive to conception: for men, they would have weak seed while women would have “a slippery uterus, as is well known in prostitutes, who are sterile.”<sup>39</sup> Commentary on *On the Secrets of Women* by Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, claimed that “harlots” suffered from external uncleanness of the womb because they “continuously receive a great deal of seed from men, so that the sperm of one man corrupts the womb when it meets the seed of another man. It suffocates and extinguishes it, and as a result generation ceases.”<sup>40</sup> Margaret’s infertility suggested that she was just that: a common woman, an adulteress.

## EDWARD'S LIFE

Despite efforts to emphasize Edward's legitimacy, Edward's chances for a smooth succession hit a low point in 1460.<sup>41</sup> After a smashing victory at the battle of Northampton in July 1460, the supporters of the Duke of York (who was in Ireland at the time) seized control of the government and the king. In autumn, the duke returned in triumph and claimed the crown (on the basis of his superior genealogical descent) in the Parliament of October 1460. The lords, however, refused to depose Henry VI, and a compromise accord made York Henry's heir, excluding Edward, Henry's own son.<sup>42</sup> Although York was killed in December 1460, his eldest son Edward carried on the Yorkist fight.

In either November or December 1460, Edward's councilors issued a letter in the prince's name to the city of London, in which Edward decried York as a "false traitor" who was spreading rumors that the Lancastrians intended to bring in "strangers" that would despoil, rob, and utterly destroy the city. The prince declared that the rumor was untrue, adding that he would never destroy London as it was too valuable to the crown—of which he was heir "rightfully and lineally born," and further that the prince also trusted he had the support of all "true subjects."<sup>43</sup> At age seven, Edward was too young to have crafted such a political statement himself, but he was learning the ways of royal authority and written diplomacy. The prince was in a similar situation around 1464, when he sent a letter, which John Fortescue had composed, to Alfonso V, King of Portugal, asking for his kinsman's help against the "tyrants" and "rebels" in England. Edward suggested that if Alfonso did help, he would be no less praiseworthy than the likes of Achilles, Hector, and Hercules.<sup>44</sup> Should Alfonso need further convincing, the letter mentioned that the Earl of Ormond, who was then in Portugal, could elaborate. At the same time, Edward wrote to Ormond with "mine own hand, that you may see how good writer I am," expressing his trust that the earl would do his utmost to convince Alfonso to help "my lord [Henry VI] in the recovering of his right and subduing of his rebels."<sup>45</sup> At the relatively young age of eleven, Edward was already integrated into the diplomatic dance on which rested the Lancastrian hopes of redemption, being used as a figurehead but also showing an understanding of what had transpired and making efforts to gain allies. In addition, the prince was charmingly eager to show off his penmanship and English composition skills.

But there were also harsher lessons to learn. After the Lancastrian victory at the second battle of St. Albans in February 1461, Henry VI knighted the prince, who in turn knighted nearly thirty others, including an earl. Two days later, Edward judged three Yorkist prisoners and witnessed their executions.<sup>46</sup> According to the diplomat and chronicler Jehan de Waurin, Margaret asked her son what death the men should face; the prince responded that their heads should be cut off.<sup>47</sup> This was surely an education in the severe realities of kingship, something a disinherited prince would need to know.

But the Lancastrian victory was a momentary reprieve; the Yorkist Edward IV proclaimed himself king in March 1461 and sealed the throne after a great victory at Towton on March 29. Although Edward IV was king, the Lancastrians did not capitulate. Henry VI was a fugitive until July 1465; after his capture in Lancashire he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Margaret of Anjou and Edward remained at large, working to regain the English throne. Since Edward's supporters, most especially his mother Margaret of Anjou, did not passively accept his disinheritance or the loss of his father's throne, the young prince was still educated as a future ruler.

The royal family fled to Scotland, where Margaret attempted to negotiate an alliance with the Queen Mother, Mary of Guelders, and even offered Edward as a marriage partner to the young Scottish princess to seal the deal.<sup>48</sup> Probably more enticing to the Scottish was the offer of Berwick-on-Tweed (then in English hands), but after an unsuccessful invasion of Northumberland, Margaret, with Edward in tow, retired to the continent in 1463 and settled at Koeur Castle in St. Mihiel in Barr until 1470.<sup>49</sup> While there, Edward weathered a couple of childhood illnesses: he suffered an unspecified malady in 1464 and was attended by Pierre Robin, physician to his grandparents, for nineteen days.<sup>50</sup> In 1467, Edward contracted either measles or smallpox, and Margaret paid Jean Martinot, a local carpenter, 115 sous to build a wooden frame to enclose Edward's bed to protect him from drafts.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout his time in Barr, Edward continued to behave as and be educated as a prince. Much of Edward's education was in the hands of Sir John Fortescue, former Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who taught Edward about the laws of England, even authoring *De Laudibus Legum Anglie* for the prince's benefit.<sup>52</sup> Fortescue's work provides a sense of Edward's education, as Fortescue described how the prince "gave himself over entirely to martial exercises ... often delighting in

attacking and assaulting the young companions attending him ... in a warlike manner and in accordance with the rules of military discipline.”<sup>53</sup> And Fortescue was not necessarily exaggerating for effect because, according to the Milanese ambassador, when Edward was only thirteen he “talks of nothing but of cutting off heads or making war, as if he had everything in his hands or was the god of battle or the peaceful occupant of that throne.”<sup>54</sup> Such an education was vital for a prince (especially an exiled one), but Fortescue insisted it was proper for a prince to learn the laws of his kingdom as well because “*the office of a king is to fight the battles of his people and to judge them rightfully.*”<sup>55</sup> According to *De Laudibus*, Edward was convinced by Fortescue’s “most persuasive discourse,” to hear his lessons on the laws of England.<sup>56</sup> The extent of Edward’s legal learning cannot be gleaned from this tract, especially since it was written not long before the prince’s death, but it reflects the importance of legal training to princely education.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the 1460s, Margaret attempted to rally the Lancastrian cause, appealing to Alfonso V of Portugal and Louis XI of France.<sup>58</sup> But these attempts all failed, until 1470 when Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, disillusioned with Edward IV, fled to France and sought an alliance with Margaret in order to restore Henry VI to the throne. For her part, Margaret took some convincing; after all, Warwick had been a firm ally of the Duke of York and had spread rumors about Margaret being an adulteress, thereby suggesting Edward was a bastard.<sup>59</sup> According to *The Manner and Guiding of the Earl of Warwick at Angers*, a propaganda tract by the Earl of Warwick, Margaret eventually pardoned Warwick, as did Edward, marking the prince as a political actor. Edward was further designated as regent for his father and later appointed king’s lieutenant.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, the second point of the alliance, a proposed marriage between Edward and Anne Neville, younger daughter of Warwick, proved more difficult to arrange. Margaret adamantly refused for days until Fortescue, Louis XI, and councilors of Margaret’s father, all of whom supported the union, prevailed on Margaret to accept.<sup>61</sup> Although *The Manner and Guiding* explicitly mentioned Edward’s role in Warwick’s pardoning and proposed future rule of England, the prince seems to have had less agency concerning the marriage that sealed the alliance. Sources did not note either Edward or Anne’s attitudes toward this union of former enemies, but perhaps they shared the chronicler Philippe de Comynes’ assessment that “[t]his was a strange marriage!”<sup>62</sup> Regardless of its oddity, the two married in December 1470,

after Warwick had returned to England but before Edward and Margaret had (a sure sign of Margaret's continued distrust).<sup>63</sup>

While Warwick was working in England, Prince Edward was politically engaged elsewhere. On November 28, 1470, Edward agreed to an alliance with Louis XI against Charles, Duke of Burgundy; namely that England and France would fight together until Burgundy was conquered and neither country would make peace independently.<sup>64</sup> Edward would also urge his father to make war, and Louis promised to assist in expelling Edward IV (referred to by his non-royal title of Earl of March).<sup>65</sup> Louis XI was clearly banking on Edward's future position as regent for his father, while Edward was able to flex his political muscle and gain valuable experience in international diplomacy, essential knowledge for a future ruler.

But Edward died in his first battle, at Tewkesbury, on May 4, 1471. The exact circumstances of his death are unclear and often highly fictionalized. The sources written closest to the battle agree that Edward was killed in the fighting, but some near-contemporary sources claim otherwise.<sup>66</sup> According to one chronicle, he "was taken, fleeing to the town wards, and slain, in the field."<sup>67</sup> As early as 1473, though, other stories were current; one chronicle noted that some people claimed Edward was captured and brought before Edward IV, who struck the prince across the face with his own sword before he was then beaten to death by the king's men.<sup>68</sup> Many Tudor chroniclers, supportive of the Lancastrian cause, repeated the latter story. Others elaborated it further by turning the prince's nameless murders into familiar Yorkist nobles. Polydore Vergil and Raphael Holinshed (Shakespeare's sources) wrote that the Duke of Clarence, William Lord Hastings, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester murdered Edward after the king slapped him.<sup>69</sup> Edward's death had thus transitioned into an illustrative example, aimed at showing the depravity of the Yorkists and Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later Richard III).

## CONCLUSION

Following the accepted practice of hereditary monarchy, Edward of Westminster's birth should have halted the magnates' jockeying for the throne. Instead, Edward became an obstacle for the Yorkists to get rid of, which was partially done through exploiting his parents' reproductive difficulties. Whether opponents of the Lancastrian dynasty claimed the

prince was a bastard or that the prince was a changeling, the eight-year wait for an heir irreparably harmed Edward's royal standing and claim to the throne. While there were many reasons for the overthrow of the Lancastrian dynasty, the somewhat plausible rumors about Edward's heritage made it easier for England's magnates to deny him his inheritance. Yet even after Edward was exiled, his mother still ensured that he was educated as a prince. Edward's education reflects the essential aspects of medieval kingship—military, diplomatic, and legal prowess—that any prince needed to know. Unfortunately for Edward, he never got to put that education to use as king. In this case, being an unexpected heir meant not inheriting at all.

## NOTES

1. For other issues that impinged on Edward's disinheritance, particularly his father's weakness as king, see Bertram Percy Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London: Methuen, 1981); John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004).
2. Helen E. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 41.
3. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 41. The Beauforts had technically been excluded from the succession by Henry IV in 1407, but this was not binding on his successors and could potentially have been reversed. Gloucester might have had illegitimate children, but he certainly had no legitimate progeny. Beaufort was made duke in 1448.
4. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI*, 256. See also R.A. Griffiths, "The Sense of Dynasty in the Reign of Henry VI," in *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, ed. C. Ross (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1979), 13–36.
5. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI*, 257.
6. TNA/PRO KB 9/260, membrane 85. "rull is nowtte." Bago was already in jail; fellow prisoner John Cobert reported Bago's words. Cobert might have accused Bago of these treasonous words in order to benefit himself. However, the indictment possibly represented common gossip or the kind of libel likely to draw the attention of the authorities.
7. TNA/PRO KB 9/260, membrane 85. The indictment is from 1448, though, so Bago must have spoken these words near the end of 1447. "our sayd soverayn lord the kyng wold have hys dysporte wythoure soverayn lady the quene that then the sayd bishop of Salisbury and othir mo that were abowteoure sayd soverayn lord the kyng conselyd hym that he

- schuld not come nye her the wyche is cause that schee is not consewyd and so the lond is desavid of a prince.”
8. Christopher Fletcher, “Manhood, Kingship and the Public in Late Medieval England,” *Edad Media: Revista de Historia* 13 (2012): 123–142, at 134.
  9. Canterbury Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/C/239. This is recorded in the confession of a fellow prisoner, John Andrew. “oure Qwene was nout abil to be Qwene of Ingland but and he were a pere of or a lord of thys ream he wulde be on of thaym that shuld helpe to putte here a doun for be cause that sche bereth no child and be cause that we haue no pryns in this land.” For printed versions, see Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Fifth Report* (London, 1876), 455 and J. Brigstocke Sheppard, ed., *Literæ Cantuarienses: The Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury*, Vol. III (London: HRSO by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), 195–197.
  10. “Annales of William Worcester,” in *Letters and papers illustrative of the wars of the English in France during the reign of Henry the Sixth, king of England*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Vol. II, part ii (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), 770. “quia rex adhuc non haberet prolem ...” N.H. Nicholas and E. Tyrell, eds., *A Chronicle of London from 1089 to 1483* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827), 137. The Commons agreed but “the kyng and lordes wold not consent nor graunte, but anon brake up the parlemente.” Yonge had worked as an attorney for York in 1449. See also P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York 1411–1460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 98–99. Yonge’s recommendation sought to promote the Duke of York over Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, a very powerful royal councilor. Had Henry recognized York as heir apparent, York would have become the first councilor of the realm, effectively stripping Somerset of his position. Neither Somerset nor Henry wanted that. See Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, 100; Michael K. Jones, “Somerset, York and the Wars of the Roses,” *English Historical Review* 104, no. 411 (April 1989): 285–307, at 289, note 2; and A.F. Pollard, “Yonge, Sir Thomas (c. 1405–1477),” rev. Nigel Ramsay, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (accessed February 16, 2013). As a member of the Beaufort family, Somerset was a descendant of John of Gaunt through an illegitimate line that Henry IV had barred from inheriting the throne.
  11. On the insulting aspects, see Jones, “Somerset, York and the Wars of the Roses,” at 289, note 2.
  12. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 43; Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3, 18. For Becket assisting an infertile woman to

- conceive and helping women in childbirth, see James C. Robertson, ed., *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, Vol. I (London: Longman & Co., 1875), 264–265 (infertile), 393, 469–470.
13. W.G. Searle, ed., *The Chronicle of John Stone, Monk of Christ Church, 1415–1471*, Octavo Series 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1902), 39–40, 42. “Item hoc anno in vigilia sancti Michaelis [28 Sept.] ante vespervas venit Margareta regina Anglie pedester, vxor Henrici vjti, Cantuariam causa peregrinacionis, et recepta fuit a priore et conu-  
entu in capis albis ad portam ecclesie, cum responsorio: Audi filia. Et in die sancti Michaelis [29 Sept.] ante vespervas recessit.”
  14. Carole Rawcliffe, “Richard, Duke of York, the King’s ‘obesant liege-  
man’: A New Source for the Protectorates of 1454 and 1455,” *Historical Research* 60, no. 142 (1987): 232–239, at 237. “[I]t pleasid ther unto in your comyng from that blissid, gracious and devout pilgremage of our lady of Walsyngham to suffre the comyng of my simple person.” The timing is uncertain; Rawcliffe argued for 1452 (after Dartford when Cecily would need to appeal to the queen) while Helen Maurer argued for April 1453 (Margaret was in Norwich around April 20, 1453). See Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 43 and Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster: The Yorkist Use of Gendered Propaganda during the Wars of the Roses,” in *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 169–186, at 173.
  15. Technically the year began on March 25, but people commonly considered January 1 to be the start of a new year. See A.R. Myers, “The Jewels of Queen Margaret of Anjou,” in *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 212, note 1.
  16. Myers, “The Jewels of Queen Margaret of Anjou,” 221–228, gift at 222. “vnum tabulettum auri garnisatum in borduris eiusdem cum x trochis perularum, v saphires, et v baleys cum vno angelo in medio, habenti caput vinus camewe et in medio eiusdem sursum vnum bonum saphirum et tenenti inter manus suas vanam crucem garnisatam cum vno rubie et ix parulis orientis.” Laynesmith has suggested Margaret might have known she was pregnant on New Year’s, but that is unlikely since Edward was born ten-and-a-half months later on October 13, 1453. See Joanna L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445–1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 111. One chronicle claimed Edward was conceived on the Feast of the Confessor (January 5), a probably inaccurate but neat parallel with his birth on the Feast of the Translation of the Confessor (October 13). See J.A. Giles, ed., *Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon Angliae: De Regnis Trium Regum Lancastrensi-  
um, Henrici IV, Henrici V, et Henrici VI* (London: D. Nutt, 1848), 44.

17. C. Given-Wilson et al., eds., *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* (PROME) (Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions and The National Archives, 2005), Parliament of July 1455, section 318. This exempted Tunstall from the acts of resumption.
18. Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France During the Reign of Henry VI, King of England*, Vol. II, Part II (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), 508. “unto oure moost dere and moost entierly belovede wyf the queene, whils she was withe childe with oure first begotene son the prince.”
19. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCC-ChChLet/II/63. “the Queenys good grace is quik with child.” The letter was dated the 20th day of August, but no year was provided.
20. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI*, 715–717.
21. Bale’s Chronicle, *Six Town Chronicles of England*, ed. Ralph Flenley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 140.
22. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, eds., *The Great Chronicle of London* (Guildhall Library MS 3313) (London: George W. Jones, 1938), 186; C.L. Kingsford, ed., *Chronicles of London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905), 163. “was delyuered of a fair Prynce.”
23. James Gairdner, ed., *The Paston Letters A.D. 1422–1509*, 6 vols. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), Vol. II, 295–296.
24. N. Davis, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971–1976), Vol. II, 92–93.
25. The king generally decided when to invest the Prince of Wales with the title, as it was not achieved automatically but rather had to be bestowed. For instance, the Commons of Parliament asked Edward III to invest the future Richard II with the title within weeks of his father’s death, but Edward did not invest Richard until November 1376 (five months later). See Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 17.
26. Davis, *Paston Letters*, Vol. II, 108.
27. The rumors began around the time York’s Second Protectorate (1455–1456) ended. Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster,” 176.
28. “John Benet’s Chronicle for the Years 1400 to 1462,” in *Camden Miscellany*, Vol. XXIV, ed. G.L. Harriss and M.A. Harriss, Camden Society, 4th Series, Vol. 9 (London, 1972), 151–233, at 216. “fecit Billas dicentes quod Edwardus princeps not fuit filius regine.” Helton took back these words before he died.
29. “John Benet’s Chronicle,” 216, note 225.
30. Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster,” 176–177. Quote on 177 from Corporation of London Record Office, Journal VI, f. 117b.

31. Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster,” 177–178 and *Calendar Patent Rolls, Henry VI*, Vol. VI: 1452–1461 (London: HMSO, 1910), 404.
32. William Marx, ed., *An English Chronicle, 1377–1461: edited from Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 21068 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lyell 34* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 78; J.S. Davies, ed., *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI*, Camden Society, Old Series 64 (London, 1856), 79. “The queene was defamed and desclaundersed that he that was called prince was nat hir sone but a bastard gotten in avoutry.” This chronicle was written during Henry’s reign, so the record of the rumor is contemporary. Other chroniclers were less specific with their insults. Bale’s Chronicle simply noted “the peple spake strangely” about Prince Edward’s birth. Bale recorded this in his entry announcing Edward’s birth and baptism, but this did not mean such talk was current from the moment the prince was born. Bale’s chronicle was probably written in 1460–1461, at a time when rumors of Edward’s illegitimacy were rife. That would probably account for the mention during discussions of the prince’s birth. See “Bale’s Chronicle” in *Six Town Chronicles of England*, 141.
33. A.B. Hinds, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Milan*, Vol. I (1385–1618) (London: HMSO, 1912), 27.
34. Given earlier evidence, it perhaps seems strange that the newsletter noted people were “beginning” to declare the prince illegitimate, but this probably reflected increased dissemination of the rumor. Now that the civil war was in full swing, rumors of Prince Edward’s illegitimacy became more pertinent.
35. Hinds, *State Papers Milan*, Vol. I, 58. The mention of “common fanatics” hinted that the rumors had spread throughout the island and were not just the talk of Yorkist magnates.
36. For details on Henry VI and his difficulties projecting manliness, see Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013). See pp. 206, 208 for how childlessness contributed to Henry’s unmanliness.
37. See Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster,” 178; Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 82; Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 25, 80–81; Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity*, trans. Felicia Pheasant (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 39. Medieval medicine was heavily indebted to ancient medicine. Joan Cadden,

- Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 92–94.
38. William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy (Dragmaticon Philosophiae): Translation of the New Latin Critical Text with a Short Introduction and Explanatory Notes*, trans. Italo Ronca and Matthew Curr (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), xvii, 136–137.
  39. Alberti Magni, *Opera Omnia: Super Ethica*, ed. Wilhelm Kübel, Vol. 14 (Aschendorff: Monasterii Westfalorum, 1968–1972), Liber III, Lectio XIII, 207. “impediretur generatio ex lubricatione matricis, sicut patet in meretricibus, quae sunt steriles.”
  40. Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' De secretis mulierum with Commentaries*, trans. Helen Rodnite Lemay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 137.
  41. The most notable example was a series of pageants that took place at Coventry in 1456. For details, see Joanna L. Laynesmith, “Constructing Queenship at Coventry: Pageantry and Politics at Margaret of Anjou's ‘Secret Harbour,’” in *The Fifteenth Century III: Authority and Subversion*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 137–148, esp. 137, 138, 140, 141; Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster,” 177.
  42. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, 867–869. Margaret Lucille Kekewich, Colin Richmond, Anne F. Sutton, Livia Visser-Fuchs, and John L. Watts, *The Politics of Fifteenth-Century England: John Vale's Book* (Oxford: Alan Sutton, 1995), 195–202. Prince Edward is not mentioned at all in the new succession agreement, which was more concerned with showing that Richard, Duke of York had a better claim to the throne than the then-current king. Perhaps the rumors of bastardy had some effect, though, as Edward was cast aside so easily. See Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 183.
  43. Kekewich et al., *John Vale's Book*, 143. “... fals traitour that ceasith not his said malice but uttirly entendith the destruccion of my lord and of my lady nand the disherityng of us, hathe now late sowen amongis you and many othir of my lordis trewe liegemen ... that we shulde entende to make assembles of grete number of straungeres that wolde purpose to dispoile and to robbe you ... that we, rightfully and lynialy borne bidiscent of the blood roiall tenherite the premyence of this realme, shulde entende the destruccion of that citee, that is my lords gretesttreasour and owres ...”
  44. Thomas Fortescue Lord Clermont, *The Works of Sir John Fortescue*, Vol. I (London: Private distribution, 1869), 22–23, 29. “contra tyrannos contraque rebelles” and “non minori laude quam ... Achillem, quam Hectorem, aut Herculem ipsum” (23). The letters actually do not refer

- to Alfonso by name; apparently the Lancastrians knew they were distantly related (through Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt) and were banking on that. This is not the only item Fortescue wrote but placed the prince's name on; he also penned "Articles sent from the Prince to the Earl of Warwick his father-in-law." See Charles Plummer, ed., *The Governance of England: Otherwise called the Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, 2nd edition (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), 348–353.
45. Clermont, *Works*, Vol. I, 23, 28 (quotes). "my lord in the recovering of his ryght and subduing of his rebellis" and "myn awn hand, that ye mey se how gode wrytare I am."
  46. Cora L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV*, Vol. I (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923), 43–44.
  47. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne, a present nomme Engleterre*, Vol. V, ed. W. Hardy and E. Hardy (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1891), 330. "... royne sa mere, qui luy demanda: 'Beau filz de quell mort finiront ces deux chevaliers que la veez?' ... et le jenne prince respond que len leur trencheroit les testes." The two Margaret specifically asked about were Sir Thomas Kyriell and his son.
  48. Scofield, *Life of Edward IV*, Vol. I, 134, 176. Margaret had suggested an alliance before Towton and renewed negotiations after Edward IV was king. See also Michael Hicks, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 182.
  49. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 205; Clermont, *Works*, Vol. I, 23; S.B. Chrimes, ed., *Sir John Fortescue De Laudibus Legum Anglie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), 142–144. Before going to St. Mihiel, Margaret and Edward had been to the continent in 1462 to round up allies for the invasion of Northumberland. See Scofield, *Life of Edward IV*, Vol. I, 246 and Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 205. Margaret's father, René of Anjou, gifted her Koeur castle on October 27, 1463 (see Chrimes, ed., *De Laudibus*, 142).
  50. Charles Emmanuel Dumont, *Histoire de la ville de Saint-Mihiel*, Vol. I (Nancy: Veuve A. Dard, 1860), 175. Robin had previously tended to Margaret for twelve days.
  51. Dumont, *Saint-Mihiel*, 176–177.
  52. Clermont, *Works*, Vol. I, 32.
  53. Chrimes, ed., *De Laudibus*, 3.
  54. *State Papers Milan*, Vol. I, 117. Letter is from February 14, 1467.
  55. Chrimes, ed., *De Laudibus*, 3. Italics in original.
  56. Chrimes, ed., *De Laudibus*, 19.

57. Chrimes, ed., *De Laudibus*, lxvi, lxxxvi–lxxxvii. Further evidence on the importance of legal education comes from a copy of the statutes of England that was likely commissioned by Margaret for Edward. Unfortunately, the prince died before receiving it. For more, see Rosemarie McGerr, *A Lancastrian Mirror for Princes: The Yale Law School New Statutes of England* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2011), esp. xii, 6, 121–122.
58. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 207.
59. Florence Alden Gragg, trans., *The Commentaries of Pius II, Books II and III*, Smith College Studies in History Vol. 25 (Northampton, MA: Smith College History Department, 1939–1940), 269. Pius mistakenly recorded Warwick's first name as John (it was actually Richard). Nevertheless, the comment is similar to other bits of Yorkist propaganda.
60. Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, Second Series, Vol. I (London: Harding and Lepard, 1827), 133 and Kekewich et al., *John Vale's Book*, 217. Hicks, *Warwick*, 293, 302. This tract condenses all of the debate into the meeting at Angers, but the difficult work of getting Margaret to consent to an alliance was surely done prior to the face-to-face meeting [Hicks, *Warwick*, 293 and P.W. Hammond, *The Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1990)]. Edward was appointed lieutenant in March 1471, after Warwick had placed Henry VI back on the throne (Hicks, *Warwick*, 302).
61. Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2:1, 133–134; Kekewich et al., *John Vale's Book*, 217; Clermont, *Works*, Vol. I, 36. For more on how Louis XI and Fortescue were invested in this alliance, see Hicks, *Warwick*, 292; Hammond, *The Battles*, 24; and Kekewich et al., *John Vale's Book*, 47. Supposedly, it took fifteen days for Margaret to agree to the marriage, but, as Hammond, *The Battles*, 136 n. 17 points out, the meeting at Angers took place for fewer than fifteen days total. This supports the contention that *The Manner* condenses negotiations.
62. Philippe de Commines, *Memoirs, The Reign of Louis XI 1461–1483*, trans. Michael Jones (New York: Penguin, 1972), 184.
63. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 207–208; Hicks, *Warwick*, 294. Concerning the marriage dispensation, see J. Calmette and G. Périnelle, *Louis XI et L'Angleterre (1461–1483)* (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1930), 319–320.
64. Waurin, *Recueil*, 609–611; Scofield, *Life*, Vol. I, 558; Hicks, *Warwick*, 305; Hammond, *The Battles*, 47; Calmette and Périnelle, *Louis XI*, 126.
65. Waurin, *Recueil*, 609–610.
66. Hammond, *The Battles*, 123–124. Hammond (123–126), contains the best breakdown of the various versions of and sources on Edward's death.

67. John Bruce, ed., *Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England, and the Finall Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI* (London: Camden Society, 1838), 30. “was taken, fleinge to the towne wards, and slayne, in the field.” He was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey (p. 31). This chronicle, while contemporary, was biased toward the Yorkists.
68. Hammond, *The Battles*, 124–125; “Histoire de Charles, dernier duc de Bourgogne,” in Jehan de Waurin, *Anchiennes Croniques d’Engleterre*, ed. E. Dupont, Vol. 3 (Paris, 1863), 290.
69. Hammond, *The Battles*, 125–126. Holinshed also names Thomas Grey, Marquess of Dorset.

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