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978-0-521-88999-5 - Edward I and the Governance of England, 1272–1307

Caroline Burt

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## INTRODUCTION

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

Edward I was without a doubt one of the greatest kings to rule England. He was the first monarch fully to understand the value of statute in effecting change and created one of the most comprehensive bodies of legislation seen in any medieval European realm. He also presided over a vital stage in the emergence of national taxation and, with it, parliament, and oversaw crucial changes in the way English armies were raised and deployed. In a British context, Edward was the first king to attempt to unify the isles under one ruler, an attempt which partly succeeded: although the Scots were in rebellion when Edward died, he had conquered Wales in the 1280s, cementing his conquest by building a network of castles which was the most formidable ever seen in Britain. At the same time, his control in Ireland was extensive. Across the Channel, he held Gascony more securely than his successors and gave great personal attention to its rule. In the light of this, it is natural that both Edward himself and his reign have received a great deal of attention from historians. Three significant modern biographies now exist: the first was written by Louis Salzman in the late 1960s, the second by Michael Prestwich in the 1980s, and the most recent by Marc Morris in 2008; this is not to overlook Powicke's lengthy study of Henry III and Edward as future king, produced in the 1940s. There is also a wealth of literature on aspects of the reign: the development of parliament and the emergence of a system of national taxation; warfare and logistics; statutes and the legal system; Edward's relationship with the church; his foreign policy in Scotland and Wales, and on the continent. Very recently, important doctoral research has been done on Edward's relationship with the nobility.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For further detailed discussion of all these things, see T. F. T. Plucknett, *The Legislation of Edward I* (Oxford, 1949); G. L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975); M. C. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972); M. C. Prestwich, *Edward I* (2nd edn, London, 1997), 170–232; R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales, 1063–1415* (2nd edn, Oxford, 2000), 333–88; A. D. M. Barrell, *Medieval Scotland* (Cambridge, 2000), 92–136; R. Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100–1400* (Oxford, 1990), 144–51; M. Vale, *The Origins of the Hundred Years War: The Angevin Legacy, 1250–1340* (Oxford, 1990), 63–71; L. F. Salzman, *Edward I* (London, 1968); Prestwich, *Edward I*; M. Morris, *A Great and Terrible*

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The current historiographical picture of Edward is, however, somewhat mixed. For a long time, the verdict was decidedly positive: many contemporaries and historians were in fact fulsome in their praise of him. A contemporary ballad-writer noted, for example, that he ‘was the truest man in all things’, another that no king ‘better sustained his land; all that he wished to do he brought wisely to a conclusion’, and the author of *Fleta* spoke of his ‘never-failing righteousness’.<sup>2</sup> Several hundred years later, in the seventeenth century, and in the light of Edward’s legislative achievements, Sir Edmund Coke dubbed him the ‘English Justinian’, while in the late nineteenth century the great whig historian of the middle ages, Bishop Stubbs, was to say that Edward ‘possessed in the highest degree the great qualities and manifold accomplishments of his race’.<sup>3</sup> He had, ‘besides force and honesty, a clear perception of true policy, and an intuitive knowledge of the needs of his people’.<sup>4</sup> Edward was Stubbs’ ideal king, perhaps most especially for presiding over the development of the Commons in parliament by calling representatives of the shires consistently for the first time. The first major modern study of the thirteenth century, by Maurice Powicke, continued the positive trend, commenting on Edward’s ‘love of decency and order’; ‘we remember him’, Powicke wrote, ‘not as a living man who stirs the imagination . . . we think of him in terms of his works. He is the English Justinian and the Hammer of the Scots.’<sup>5</sup> For Powicke, Edward was a king who understood his rights, but at the same time knew his duties, particularly that lordship was, as Powicke put it, ‘given for the preservation of peace and justice’.<sup>6</sup>

There were of course some failures and, no matter how great the esteem in which they have held him, historians have always been forced to acknowledge these. In particular, the later years have been seen as disappointing by comparison with the two decades to 1294. Raban, for example, aptly summarised the view of most modern historians when she wrote that ‘the later years of Edward’s reign were played out in *diminuendo*’.<sup>7</sup> Even Stubbs, while stressing Edward’s successes, had to

*King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain* (London, 2008); F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1947); A. M. Spencer, ‘The Earls in the Reign of Edward I (1272–1307)’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in M. T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers 1066–1272* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1998), 209; *Fleta*: quoted in K. B. McFarlane, ‘Had Edward I a “Policy” towards the Earls?’, in his *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973), 248–67, esp. 248.

<sup>3</sup> W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, vol. II (Oxford, 1887), 104, 109; P. Brand, *The Making of the Common Law* (London, 1992), 135.

<sup>4</sup> Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, vol. II, 106.

<sup>5</sup> F. M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1962), 227. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> S. Raban, *England under Edward I and Edward II, 1259–1327* (Oxford, 2000), 140.

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acknowledge this. By the time he faced political crisis in the late 1290s, Stubbs said, ‘the constructive part of Edward’s work was completed’, which for Stubbs meant predominantly the great legislative achievements of the first two decades.<sup>8</sup> What had gone wrong was in some ways very simple: a serious political crisis had broken out in the late 1290s relating to the king’s military commitments in France and Scotland, and the consequent demands he had made of his subjects. For some, this was not Edward’s own fault. Although Stubbs, for example, acknowledged that Edward had a number of undesirable personality traits, he remained sympathetic to him in his description of this period; the king must, he argued, have been tried by the behaviour of men (members of the nobility) who ‘from sheer wilfulness imperilled the peace of the nation’.<sup>9</sup> Powicke also markedly failed to criticise Edward himself: by 1307, he argued, when the king died, he was as ‘valiant and determined as ever, but a broken man’.<sup>10</sup>

Tout on the other hand pointed directly to failures on the part of Edward himself; indeed, for Templeman, reviewing the historiography of the reign in the 1950s, Tout’s later work reduced Edward to a ‘dour scheming autocrat’.<sup>11</sup> This more negative verdict remained largely atypical, however, until the 1960s and 1970s, when the picture painted by historians of the reign, and especially its second half, began to become much bleaker than hitherto. This change of emphasis was possibly quite simply a result of more detailed and extensive historical research than ever before and the decline of the Stubbsian whig tradition which had held Edward in such high esteem for his supposed role in the development of parliament. In his 1963 monograph, for example, Sutherland looked closely at Edward’s *quo warranto* enquiries, over which Edward was forced to compromise in 1290 and which were abandoned in 1294 ‘as a favour’ to his people by the king on the outbreak of war with France.<sup>12</sup> Sutherland praised Edward’s ambition in instituting the *quo warranto* enquiries into claims to liberties and franchises held of the crown, but concluded that they were, at the time they were abandoned, a failure anyway, because both the king and his limited number of trusted servants, justices and others were constantly overworked and unable to give enough attention to them. Indeed, he went further, arguing that this was a systemic problem with Edwardian government: too much responsibility was divested in too

<sup>8</sup> Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, vol. II, 164.      <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>10</sup> Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, 618.

<sup>11</sup> G. Templeman, ‘Edward I and the Historians’, *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1950), 16–35, esp. 25.

<sup>12</sup> D. W. Sutherland, *Quo Warranto Proceedings in the Reign of Edward I, 1278–1294* (Oxford, 1963), 93–4, 99–110, 189, 213.

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few hands, he said, which meant that all too frequently the result was ‘mediocrity’ – a failure to get close to realising ambitious plans.<sup>13</sup> Sutherland was followed by McFarlane, who in 1965 published an article on Edward and the earls which has been hugely influential, and in which McFarlane found it difficult to excuse and explain the fact that a number of comital families were ‘slimmed’ either by, or with the help of, Edward himself; for example Robert Ferrers, earl of Derby, in 1269 and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, in 1302.<sup>14</sup> This sort of action led McFarlane to ask whether Edward should be admired in the way that many historians had hitherto done. He concluded not; in sum, he argued, Edward was ruthless, and worked to ‘aggrandize’ his kin and himself in what amounted to a ‘wilful abuse of his power’. ‘Edward I preferred’, McFarlane concluded, ‘masterfulness to the arts of political management. In that sense he belonged less to the future [when, in McFarlane’s eyes, the virtues of largesse came to be rightly recognised] than to the past’, the latter being a reference to the famously robust Angevin attitude to royal authority and the law.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1970s, Prestwich’s work on war finance, which built on Tout’s research, showed that the cost of the king’s extensive military commitments in the whole period 1294–1307 left Edward II with a legacy of £200,000 of debt.<sup>16</sup> In addition, he argued, at the time of Edward I’s death, the administration was not in a particularly good state. This was so particularly in the case of the wardrobe, which had handled much Edwardian war finance.<sup>17</sup> ‘At the time of his death’, Prestwich summarised, ‘Edward I left to the son he distrusted a government weakened by debt and a country threatened by disorder, with the problem of Scotland unresolved.’<sup>18</sup> In his biography of Edward in 1988, Prestwich added that, because Edward had not increased the number of earls, he lacked a group who were committed to him and the crown.<sup>19</sup> Other work has supplemented this increasingly negative picture of the years after 1294. In 1988, Richard Kaeuper brought the idea of a link between disorder and royal policy into sharp focus in his comparative study of justice and public order in England and France. Despite describing Edward as a ‘towering state-builder’, and noting the extent to which Edward took responsibility for maintaining order, he argued that, by the late thirteenth century, a gulf had opened up between what the crown claimed to do and what it was actually able to do in this regard.<sup>20</sup> In sum, the rising devotion of resources

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 189.<sup>14</sup> See also the discussion below, 89–90, 214. McFarlane, ‘Had Edward I a “Policy” towards the Earls?’.<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 265–7. <sup>16</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 221. <sup>17</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 566.<sup>18</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 290. <sup>19</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 566.<sup>20</sup> R. W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. 3, 193.

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to war rather than law brought a correlative decline in order: ‘Stated baldly, by the end of the thirteenth century the royal governments of England and France could not carry out all of their ambitious programmes nor reach the high goals they had so often proclaimed at the same time as they waged warfare on the scale they so wanted.’<sup>21</sup>

It is Edward’s own personal limitations which have often been held responsible for the problems he faced. Prestwich, for example, pointed to his ‘stubborn obstinacy’ and his failure to employ ‘the politician’s gifts for compromise’, while McFarlane’s Edward, as we have seen, was distinctly Angevin. He was a king who believed himself to be at times above the law, and was cynical and ruthless in the advancement of his own and his family’s interests.<sup>22</sup> As McFarlane noted, recognition of these limitations is nothing new; the author of the contemporary *Song of Lewes*, for example, spoke of Edward’s duplicitous and deceitful conduct during the barons’ war, while in Stubbs’ view, although Edward was ‘personally . . . a great king’, he was ‘not above being tempted to ambition, vindictiveness, and impatient violence’.<sup>23</sup> Tout similarly spoke of his ‘violent and arbitrary character’.<sup>24</sup> The combination of these criticisms and new arguments about the failures of the reign meant that, when Prestwich wrote his biography of Edward in 1988, he concluded that Edward’s reputation among historians had ‘reached a cyclic low’.<sup>25</sup>

Modern historians of Edward I have not, of course, all reached such negative conclusions about him. Prestwich himself, while acknowledging the failures of the later years, concluded in 1997 that Edward’s reign was nonetheless ‘a great one’.<sup>26</sup> One of the great merits of his biography of Edward is the fact that he does not treat 1301–7 as a dying fall, showing, for example, that the king was doing well in Scotland at his death. In 1986, he also argued that Edward understood more about patronage and political management than McFarlane had imagined.<sup>27</sup> Thus, while it is true that Edward did not give much land away in England, he did give land to English magnates in Wales and Scotland. In England itself, meanwhile, he certainly gave rewards for service from time to time in the form of wardships, marriages and a variety of other gifts. Yet, although Prestwich was

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 383.

<sup>22</sup> M. C. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272–1377* (London, 1980), 40.

<sup>23</sup> *The Song of Lewes*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1890), 14; Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, vol. II, 165.

<sup>24</sup> T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England*, 6 vols. (Manchester, 1920–33), vol. II, 121.

<sup>25</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, xi. <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 567.

<sup>27</sup> M. C. Prestwich, ‘Royal Patronage under Edward I’, in P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England I* (Woodbridge, 1986), 41–52, esp. 52.

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more positive than McFarlane about Edward's largesse, the optimism of his conclusions should not be taken too far. In the same article, he emphasised that Edwardian patronage was relatively limited and attributed some of the blame for the crisis of 1297 to what he called a lack of generosity on Edward's part: the earl of Arundel, for example, and others actually pleaded poverty when asked to serve abroad at this time.<sup>28</sup>

These latter conclusions have, however, recently been questioned by Andrew Spencer, who has reached a still more upbeat verdict on Edward's relationship with his earls.<sup>29</sup> Spencer's argument is that we must look not only at what Edward took from members of the nobility, or principally at his land grants to them, but at his relationship with the earls as a whole. He points out that, while McFarlane said that eight families were subjected to a 'course of slimming', only four of those actually 'suffered material loss', while eight families 'benefited materially from land grants'.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Edward may have been keen to endow his own family in whatever ways he could, but his relationship with the nobility was not one which involved simply taking from them. Indeed, while there is no doubt that Edward actively pursued his family's interests, and certainly seems to have behaved badly in some cases, in others the selfishness of his actions has been exaggerated. One example of this is in relation to the Bigod inheritance, in which Edward's approach constituted, as Marc Morris has shown, precisely the reverse of what McFarlane described as the 'murder' of an earldom.<sup>31</sup> Rather, it seems to have represented a mutually beneficial deal for both Edward and the earl.

Thus, while at times it seems clear that Edward, like many kings, was willing to apply different rules to his own actions from those applied to his subjects, the extent of his wrong-doing has been over-stated. Furthermore, Spencer contends that Edward's attitude to patronage did not create opposition. There is no evidence, he maintains, that it contributed to the crisis of 1297, as Prestwich suggested; claims to poverty are not the same as claims that earls had been insufficiently rewarded for their service.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Spencer points out that, while it is true that Edward gave fewer gifts than either his father, son or grandson, these are, in many ways, bad examples to use for comparison: Henry III and Edward II were both

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., esp. 50.

<sup>29</sup> A. M. Spencer, 'Royal Patronage and the Earls in the Reign of Edward I', *History*, 93 (2008), 20–46.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>31</sup> M. Morris, 'The "Murder" of an English Earldom? Roger Bigod IV and Edward I', in M. C. Prestwich, R. H. Britnell and R. Frame (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England IX* (Woodbridge, 2003), 89–99.

<sup>32</sup> Spencer, 'Royal Patronage and the Earls in the Reign of Edward I', 23.

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guilty of woeful and much-criticised favouritism and excess, and Edward III needed to create more earls to fight with him on the continent in the late 1330s. Edward I was, Spencer concludes, conventional in his use of patronage: he rewarded good service generously, but not excessively. In fact, true liberality, he points out, may be construed as ‘the avoidance of the extremes of avarice and prodigality grounded in a doctrine of reward for those who served the king with distinction’.<sup>33</sup> In other words, patronage should be given in acknowledgement of service, but not to excess. Spencer’s wider study of the nobility under Edward I, currently only available as an unpublished doctoral thesis, reinforces this argument that their relationship with the king was broadly very productive and constructive.<sup>34</sup>

In 1986, J. R. Maddicott gave an interesting and very positive account of Edward when he argued that he preferred ‘arts of political management’ to ‘masterfulness’.<sup>35</sup> Here was a king who responded to the demands of the men of the shires for reform of local government in the aftermath of the barons’ war, a man who ‘set out to conciliate groups which had emerged in 1258 as vociferous critics of his father’s government’.<sup>36</sup> His actions included those that are well known, like the issue of the Hundred Roll enquiries into official corruption and claims to liberties and franchises (objectives which, Maddicott points out, ‘were closely connected, for extortion and peculation by royal ministers threatened the interests of both king and subjects’), and the promulgation and wide dissemination in 1275 of the Statute of Westminster I, which in many ways grew out of these enquiries.<sup>37</sup> He also provided greater opportunities for his subjects to access royal justice. But this was not all, according to Maddicott. In 1278, Edward replaced the *curiales* and professional administrators who had dominated the shrievalty in recent years, providing the localities instead with the local sheriffs, ‘vavasours of the counties’, that they had demanded in 1258. This action required and received reform of the shrieval office to make sheriffs less susceptible to pressure from magnates and others, and more able to uphold royal interests while representing local ones.

The same was true, as Gerald Harriss has shown, where the royal finances were concerned.<sup>38</sup> Instead of taking money arbitrarily, as both his father and grandfather had done, he requested and mostly received grants of taxation. In return, he offered important gestures to signal his

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.    <sup>34</sup> Spencer, ‘The Earls in the Reign of Edward I (1272–1307)’.

<sup>35</sup> J. R. Maddicott, ‘Edward I and the Lessons of Baronial Reform’, in P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England I* (Woodbridge, 1986), 1–30, esp. 30.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.    <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.    <sup>38</sup> Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance*.



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gratitude for extraordinary financial assistance, as was the case in 1275, or clear and proper justification in terms of a national defensive emergency, as in the 1280s and 1290s. This led, as Harriss has documented, to the development of a system of national taxation, the parameters of which were increasingly clearly defined. Such a development was, as we shall see, not without its accompanying problems, but Harriss's point, that this was a king who understood the implications of the crises of 1215 and 1258, is crucial. As a result of his actions, Edward restored royal authority while responding positively to the grievances raised under his father. The first few years of the reign, when Edward so clearly signalled all these intentions, were, in short, Maddicott summarises, a triumph of 'the arts of political management'.<sup>39</sup>

The historiography of Edward's reign is therefore extensive. Yet, despite all this, gaps remain, one of the most important of which is a relative absence of research into both national and local politics and more generally into how Edward governed his realm, especially with regard to the localities. These areas of research, which have become such a feature of work on subsequent reigns, might be summed up in the word 'governance'. While it is true that, in 1986, J. R. Maddicott produced the interesting account of local rule in the first few years of the reign which has been mentioned – which focussed on appointments to the shrievalty and showed that Edward made important changes to the personnel of the office in 1278 – that account was tantalisingly brief and has not been superseded by anything more detailed or chronologically ambitious. Other historians have certainly commented on local governance, and particularly on the state of order in the realm at various points in the reign, but they have done so mostly from anecdotal or very limited evidence.<sup>40</sup> This lack of research on the localities may result from the fact that K. B. McFarlane's work on the later middle ages inspired a generation of late medieval historians who were then to undertake research on the localities where there was simply no similar inspiring influence for the thirteenth century. Whatever the reason, conclusions hitherto have been limited as a result. Thus, in his *War, Politics and Finance*, for example, Prestwich argues that the state of order was deteriorating, but only on the basis of *causes célèbres* in Shropshire, York and Kent. Meanwhile, Richard Kaeuper, in arguing his case for Edward's failure in this area, talks of a long-term crisis of order, particularly caused by vagabonds (vagrants committing crime and causing disorder), emanating from over-population and, later,

<sup>39</sup> See above, 7.

<sup>40</sup> For the examples which follow, see Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 287–90; Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order*, 172–7.



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war. This combined in the medium term with increased influence over the judicial system by magnates and retainers at the local level to create a decline of the 'law state'. He cites as evidence of rising disorder government documents such as statutes and commissions in the last quarter of the thirteenth century (in other words, Edward I's reign) which bemoan the deterioration in public order, and the writings of chroniclers and polemicists. At the same time, Kaeuper, Alan Harding and most recently David Carpenter and Peter Coss, have argued that the government's use of a growing number of local administrators to act as officials in the thirteenth century led to corruption of the legal system by magnates anxious to preserve and extend their own influence.<sup>41</sup> Such conclusions echo the arguments made about the fifteenth century by Plummer, though Plummer argued that such ties came into being later than Edward I's reign. Writing in the nineteenth century, Plummer argued that pure, feudal (or tenurial) ties were gradually superseded in the later middle ages by what he called 'bastard feudal' connections, in which magnates paid money fees to bands of retainers who represented their interests through a mixture of violence and corruption.<sup>42</sup> The corollary of this was that the Wars of the Roses were the result of rivalry among 'over-mighty' subjects, and the consequences for the state of order in the thirteenth century have been similarly thought to be profoundly negative. Indeed, such connections allegedly threatened to undermine royal government in the localities.

The fact that such conclusions have been founded on a relative lack of research into, and therefore knowledge of, the reality of the situation on the ground and of Edwardian policy, means, however, that we lack any real sense of how far they depict reality. Indeed, in an influential article in *Past and Present* in 1993, G. L. Harriss made a very powerful argument based on evidence from later reigns that there was no decline of the 'law state' in later medieval England and that there was no related, inevitable rise in disorder.<sup>43</sup> Similarly unclear are Edward's priorities in local government, and the impact, reception and consequences of his rule within England. This is a major omission, since the central duty of a king was not only to defend his realm, but to uphold justice, to maintain order within it. At present, we have little sense of how or even whether Edward achieved this. The importance of such work in increasing our understanding of the way in which royal authority functioned has been

<sup>41</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

<sup>42</sup> John Fortescue, *The Governance of England: Otherwise called the Difference between a Limited and an Absolute Monarchy*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1885).

<sup>43</sup> G. L. Harriss, 'Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England', *Past and Present*, 138 (1993), 28–57, esp. 46–57.

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shown by research on other medieval periods, especially the aforementioned McFarlane-inspired work on the fifteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Edward Powell's work on criminal justice in the reign of Henry V, for example, examined Henry V's governance of the localities, and combined that with an analysis of contemporary expectations of kingship to provide a much fuller sense of how Henry perceived his role as king, his actions internally, and their effects. In so doing, Powell shifted the focus away from factional politics and patronage, on which much of the other new work on the period had focussed, and on to the interaction between the king, the formal mechanisms of government and the legal system, and private power structures. For the first time, a sense emerged of the workings of late medieval government and the impact that the governance of an individual king could have on local order.<sup>45</sup> Christine Carpenter's work on the fifteenth century as a whole has similarly provided historians, through a case study of Warwickshire, with an understanding of how royal governance affected, and was affected by, politics and landed society in the shires.<sup>46</sup> Finally, Helen Castor's research on how Henry IV, V and VI managed their twin roles as duke of Lancaster and king, and the impact of their respective attempts to reconcile the two on the ground, has further enhanced our understanding of Lancastrian rule and its effects.<sup>47</sup> All these studies together have enlightened our understanding of local society, and cemented a sense of the importance of the king's role in maintaining peace and order, and the dependence of all players in the political community on an effective monarch. Indeed, arguably the most important result of this work is that the Wars of the Roses are no longer seen as a factional struggle between 'over-mighty' and ambitious magnates, but the consequence of monumental failures of royal governance under Henry VI, as K.B. McFarlane suggested must be the case over half a century ago, before such work was done.<sup>48</sup> In fact, Plummer's suggestion that 'bastard

<sup>44</sup> See above, 8.

<sup>45</sup> E. Powell, 'After "After McFarlane": The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History', in D.J. Clayton, R. G. Davies and P. McNiven (eds.), *Trade, Devotion and Governance* (Stroud, 1994), 1–16. This is also discussed fully in M. C. Carpenter, 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane', in R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.), *The McFarlane Legacy* (Stroud, 1995), 175–206.

<sup>46</sup> M. C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>47</sup> H. R. Castor, *The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power, 1399–1461* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>48</sup> K. B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England*, 102–21; K. B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays*, ed. G. L. Harriss (London, 1981), 23–55 and Harriss' introduction, ix–xxvii. Initially McFarlane placed a lot of emphasis on military needs, but revised his view over time.