

The Chamber Books of Henry VII and Henry VIII, 1485-1521: An Analysis of the Books and a Study of Henry VII and his Life at Court.¹

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The books of the King's chamber of receipt and expenditure, alongside the associated financial memoranda, known colloquially as the Chamber Books, are a source of unique significance for the history of late fifteenth and early sixteenth century England. They are the only surviving personal account of medieval monarchs; although earlier kings did channel significant sums through more direct channels than the bureaucratic Exchequer, such as the Wardrobe, these lack the detail and immediacy of the Chamber Books, which also match such sources in noting state expenditure, sometimes on a massive scale. The Chamber records of Edward IV, on whose system Henry VII's chamber was based (and improved), would have been presumably comparable but these do not survive. Thus, the Chamber Books record unparalleled insight into the hobbies, interests, personal and professional relationships, health, and habits of Henry VII and to a lesser extent that of Henry VIII, as well as information about their court, diplomacy and statecraft.

Henry VII has never caught the popular interest in the way his predecessor or successor have. He has traditionally been seen as a liminal king – his reign an adjunct to studies of the medieval monarchy and/or the Wars of the Roses or as a precursor to the fully fledged Tudor state and the Tudor revolution in government.² This lack of attention to the king is reflected in the academic historiographical lacuna that exists for his reign, notably on the politics of the reign and more personal aspects of his kingship. The focus has traditionally been on Henry's statecraft, the machinery of government and the creation of conciliar methods to improve efficiency and revenue collection; this is not to denigrate classic studies such as those by Dietz or Richardson, nor more recent scholarship on these topics.³ To take one example, the biography of Henry VII in the Yale Monarch Series, by Stanley Chrimes, first published in 1972, has 200 pages covering the personnel and the machinery of government and statecraft, with only 100 pages devoted to Henry's career pre-Bosworth, his early years as king and the problem of security, while 24 pages cover the king's personality and interests, though the latter is widely acknowledged to be very well done.⁴ Few biographies of the king have been published in the years since, compared to, for example, the numerous ones on Richard III in the past decade, though it is noticeable that the personality of the king is more to the fore in recent years in studies by Sean Cunningham

¹ All references in what follows to the Chamber Books are to this online edition: *The Chamber Books of Henry VII and Henry VIII, 1485-1521*, eds. M.M. Condon, S.P. Harper, L. Liddy, and S. Cunningham and J. Ross, www.tudorchamberbooks.org

² For a recent discussion see S.J. Gunn, 'Henry VII in Context: Problems and Possibilities', *History*, 92 (2007), 301-17

³ F.G. Dietz, *English Government Finance, 1485-1558* (Illinois, 1920); W.C. Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration, 1485-1547* (Baton Rouge, 1952); M.M. Condon, 'An Anachronism with Intent? Henry VII's Council Ordinances of 1491/2', in R.A. Griffiths and J. Sherbourne, ed., *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages. A Tribute to Charles Ross* (Gloucester, 1986), 228-53.

⁴ S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972; 2nd edn, New Haven and London, 1999).

and Thomas Penn.⁵ The politics of the king's reign or his interests were never entirely neglected but were not prominent themes in the historiography.⁶ There has, however, been something of revival of academic study on the reign in recent years, with significant new studies of Henry's parliaments, his New Men and of a range of aspects of his kingship and policy in the last decade or so.⁷

The early years of Henry VIII's reign, perhaps more surprisingly, have suffered from similar neglect. Whilst much has been written about the king's marital problems, schism with the papacy and descent into tyranny, there has been comparatively little focus on the early years of his reign.⁸ The first half dozen years of Henry VIII's reign saw the dominance of the more able and less predatory of his father's ministers, evolving only half-way through the decade into a distinctly different pattern with the rise of Thomas Wolsey as chief minister; arguably Wolsey has had as much attention as his royal master from scholars writing about the 1510s and 1520s.⁹ In this period, Henry was happily married and though international wars and spectacular ceremonies in the name of peace have caught the interest of historians, it is perhaps only from the 1520s, with the rise of resistance to taxation in 1525, the issue of Anne Bolyen and the divorce and the fall of Wolsey, that Henrician scholarship rises exponentially.¹⁰

⁵ Notably S. Cunningham, *Henry VII* (Abingdon, 2007); T. Penn, *Winter King. The Dawn of Tudor England* (London, 2011)

⁶ For examples see S. Anglo, 'The Court Festivals of Henry VII', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 43 (1960–1), 27–45; M.M. Condon, 'Ruling Elites in the Reign of Henry VII' in *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, ed. C.D. Ross (Gloucester, 1979), 109–42; A. Goodman, 'Henry VII and Christian Renewal', *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981), 115–25; S.J. Gunn, S.J., 'The Courtiers of Henry VII', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), 23–49; T.B. Pugh, 'Henry VII and the English Nobility' in G.W. Bernard, ed., *The Tudor Nobility* (Manchester, 1992), 49–110. The classic 'Rapacity and Remorse' debate covered both politics (to a point) and financial policy: G.R. Elton, 'Henry VII: Rapacity and Remorse', *Historical Journal*, 1 (1958), 21–39; idem, 'Henry VII: a Restatement', *Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 1–29; J.P. Cooper, 'Henry VII's Last Years Reconsidered', *HJ*, 2 (1959), 103–29.

⁷ P.R. Cavill, *The English Parliaments of Henry VII 1485–1504* (Oxford, 2009); S.J. Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England* (Oxford, 2016); 'Who was Henry VII?', ed. M.R. Horowitz, *Historical Research*, 82:217 (2009), a special edition of the journal contains articles by a number of scholars on diplomacy, Household and chamber officials, urban policy, recognizances and loyalty and policy and prosecution among others.

⁸ With some exceptions. notably including D. Starkey, *Henry: Virtuous Prince* (London, 2008).

⁹ There is no work on Henry VIII between 1510 and 1530 to match the monumental study of Wolsey by Peter Gwyn: *The King's Cardinal. The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London, 1990), nor the recent in-depth study by Diarmuid McCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell. A Life* (London, 2018). See also the recent G. Richardson, *Wolsey* (London, 2020)

¹⁰ For the wars of the first two decades see in particular S.J. Gunn, *The English People at War in the Age of Henry VIII* (Oxford, 2018), and for failed peace-making: G. Richardson, *The Field of the Cloth of Gold* (London and New Haven, 2013). For a selection of the scholarship on the problems of the second half of the 1520s and after, see G.W. Bernard, *War, Taxation and Rebellion in Early Tudor England. Henry VIII, Wolsey and the Amicable Grant of 1525* (Brighton, 1986); idem, *The King's Reformation. Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (London, 2005). It is worth noting for example that Kevin Sharpe's *Selling the Tudor Monarchy* (London, 2009) does not deal with Henry VIII's reign in detail until after the Reformation.

Part of the problem for this historical neglect lies in the transitional nature of the underlying source material, a point made by both Steven Gunn and Christine Carpenter.¹¹ The chronicles and usual Crown-generated records utilised by medievalists begin to dwindle, and the letter collections and State Papers that are the staple of the Tudor historian are in a foetal state for Henry VII's reign, though there are several collections of edited documents of all types, while the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* are certainly thinner for the early years of Henry VIII's reign than later.¹² Both Gunn and Carpenter acknowledge briefly the sources of the royal chamber. Yet perhaps the value of the Chamber Books needs greater emphasis, coming both through individual items of expenditure, many of which are known and discussed though others have yet to bear fruit (as can be seen in the case study on Henry VII below), but also the collective accumulation of material across the 4,300 pages of the books transcribed by the Winchester project, which can now be searched.

With the broadening of the scope of study on Henry VII in recent years, this project, as an examination of the Chamber Books that lie at the heart of the administrative system of Henry VII and Henry VIII, might seem to cement the tradition of firmly tying the old king to his bureaucracy and the young king to an initial continuation of his father's administration. To an extent this cannot be avoided: the Chamber Books naturally provide insight into Henry VII's financial modus operandi and the development of the Chamber finance system over the course of John Heron's tenure as Treasurer of the Chamber. Yet, they are a source that can shed light on an astonishing array of topics, expected and unexpected, and certainly well beyond administrative topics.

The research findings of the Winchester project are still in progress, both a study of Kingship and Political Society by Ross and Cunningham, to be published by Oxford University Press, and it is also hoped that a number of the papers presented at the Early Tudor Court Culture conference in September 2018 will be published. This article complements these intended outputs by illumination two aspects of the research of the project, tangentially related. Firstly, in its proper place alongside the digital edition, is the first full analysis of the Chamber books, setting them in the context of the King's Chamber and the administrative structures that produced them.¹³ This contains a detailed study of the two types of books – the receipt books and the books of payments (also containing various financial memoranda) – setting out the process of composition, their ongoing annotation through addition of

¹¹ A point made by C. Carpenter, 'Henry VII and the English Polity', in B. Thompson, ed., *The Reign of Henry VII* (Stamford, 1995), 12-13 and Gunn, 'Henry VII in Context', 302-3.

¹² *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R.S. Brodie (22 vols. in 35, London, 1862-1932); *Memorials of King Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (Rolls Series, 10, 1858); *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reign of Richard III and Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (2 vols., Rolls Series, 24, 1861-3); *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, ed. W. Campbell (2 vols., Rolls Series, 60, 1873-7); A. F. Pollard, *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* (3 vols, London, 1913-14),

¹³ There has been little detailed analysis of the records of the Chamber. Chrimes, *Henry VII*, 332 summarises the surviving books known to him at that date and sets out a very brief description; Cunningham, *Henry VII*, 142-4 gives an overview of the Chamber system and books; Dietz, *English Government Finance*, chaps 3 & 4 and Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*, chapters 3 & 4 describe the system but not the documents in great detail. Cf also B.P. Wolffe, 'Henry VII's Land Revenue and Chamber Finance', *English Historical Review*, 79 (1964), 225-64.

marginalia and the importance of understanding the layers of use that this demonstrates. It also summarises the archival history of the records of the chamber, including the loss of several chamber books, and the historiographical use of the Chamber Books. The [Editorial Method](#) of the production of the digital edition of the Chamber Books is outlined elsewhere on this website.

Secondly, a synopsis of Henry VII and his life at the court highlights the level and detail of what can be discovered through sustained analysis of the chamber books, and the potential for further research. It looks at Henry's habitual piety and plans for memorialisation, the rhythms of the court year both in terms of social events and religious observation, as well as annual celebrations, reviews the evidence for Henry's leisure time, briefly looks at Henry's extra-familial relationships and friendships, and concludes with an analysis of the staff of the royal chamber in daily attendance on the king.

Together these topics are suggestive of a framework for understanding the Chamber Books and their further use as well as highlighting their potential for future research in many areas of early Tudor history. The edition of the Chamber Books on this website is for all to use; part of the value of such digital humanities projects is the way such resources can be used that were not considered by the project team.

There is always a danger of placing the Chamber Books on a pedestal. The books are good at providing secure chronological scaffolding for an age short on narrative sources, or for which original material has had its natural order disturbed. They are reasonably good at answering 'how much?', but less consistently good at answering the questions 'for what?', or 'for whom?', while they can be frustrating in not always answering the 'why' question. A reference is made below to a requiem for Henry VII, whose obit was always inconveniently near St George's day, and in some years had to be postponed to allow proper celebration of Easter. The Books specify the payment and the reason for the offering. They do not actually name the king – that has to be supplied. It is offered here as an uncontroversial example of an exercise, often more difficult of execution, that has to be repeated many times over. There is non-verbal information in the books that will not be rescued in any computer search, but has to be recovered visually. Wherever possible, it is there, on the database, by virtue of dedicated tagging.¹⁴ For the student of history the books still offer 'an adventure; a detective story', with likely ramifications¹⁵ There is of course always also the danger of taking interpretation too far.

The Chamber Books of Henry VII and Henry VIII – An Analysis

There is an easy familiarity to the term 'Chamber Books'. The phrase is, however, in effect an acronym. There are others. To nineteenth century antiquarians these same books were 'Household Books' (a term that is still found in use), or 'Privy Purse Accounts'. That latter description is understandable, since the various books carry the unmistakable sign manuals

¹⁴ For example, recurrent, if occasional, marginalia include a heavy cross. Signifying *mortuus est* – he is dead. The inferred action required was to stop paying, or to find another way to recover a debt.

¹⁵ Quote from Agnes Conway, *Henry VII's Relations with Scotland and Ireland, 1485-1498* (Cambridge, 1932), referring to her own 'dry book'.

of the two kings, but it is a misnomer.¹⁶ There was a keeper of the Privy Purse, responsible for little more than petty cash under Henry VII, and, under Henry VIII, for increasingly large sums of money to the eclipse of the Chamber, but he was not so-called officially until the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁷ The two offices were distinct. In administrative terms, the 'Chamber Books' discussed here were the account books or ledgers maintained by the Treasurer of the King's Chamber. John Heron, the second of Henry VII's treasurers of the Chamber, and who continued until the year before his death in 1522 to serve Henry VIII in that same office, was more direct. The books were 'The Kinges Boke of his Receiptes', and 'The Kynges boke of paymentis'.¹⁸

The office of the treasurer of the Chamber was an ancient one, firmly embedded within the king's household, but changing in importance and function over time.¹⁹ Few directly compiled records have survived from the high middle ages, and none for the Yorkist kings, even if substantial transfers to the Chamber of money nominally under Exchequer control suggests the heightened importance of the Chamber under Edward IV. 'The 'Black Book' of Edward IV, a set of Ordinances for the governance of the king's household, places the treasurer of the Chamber within the Jewel House.²⁰ This arrangement continued under Henry VII. It in part explains both the operation and the records of Henry VII's treasury of the Chamber, as well as the liveries given, under the heading of 'The Juelhouse', to John Heron, and to one of his clerks, for the funeral of Henry VII's queen in 1503.²¹ By 1509, for the funeral of Henry VII, and again under the same heading, the number of Heron's subordinate staff given mourning livery had expanded to seven.²²

The books themselves tell a story beyond mere bureaucratic convention: of John Heron's close and continual access to the king in the reign of Henry VII, and the Chamber's place at the heart of that king's governance as a repository of memory as well as of money. If the relationship was more distant and more structured under Henry VIII, the Treasury of the Chamber continued to trump the Exchequer as, in effect, a national treasury. It was the

¹⁶ Household Books is an elastic term, but its most common meaning is to ledgers that record daily expenditure on diet – food and drink – and other quotidian services essential to the smooth running of the aristocratic, clerical or gentry household. See particularly C. M. Woolgar, ed., *Household Accounts from Medieval England* (2 vols., Records of Social and Economic History, New Series, XVII-XVIII, British Academy vols., 1992-3); C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (London, 1999). The British Library still uses the term 'Household Books' in its description of the Chamber manuscripts.

¹⁷ Summary account in David Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber 1485-1547', in David Starkey, *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 92-8.

¹⁸ The National Archives [TNA], E101/413/2/2, front cover; similarly E101/413/2/3; E36/214, f. 1r, E36/215, f. 1r; E36/216 f. 1r.

¹⁹ The *locus classicus* for this is T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* (6 vols, Manchester, 1920-1933), especially vol. 2.

²⁰ A. R. Myers, ed. *The Household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 22-3, 121-3, 291.

²¹ TNA, LC2/1, f. 67v. The clerk was John Atrees. Chamber Books of the 1490s yield the names of other junior clerks.

²² TNA, LC2/1, f. 141r. The named clerks were John Trees or Atrees 'yeoman', Richard aLee 'yeoman', John Porthe, Thomas Alester, Richard Atrees, Robert Fowler, and John Jenyns 'yeoman'. John Daunce had by this date moved into the Exchequer as a teller, but retained a close connection with the Chamber office.

paymaster for the king's war machine, and for the creation of a renaissance court. Under both kings it was a source of ready finance for diplomacy, both for minor expenses and in grand gesture politics. It was the source of ready cash for the maintenance of the king's household, providing regular bridging loans to smooth the delays inherent in the collection of revenues assigned to the Household by the Exchequer. It funded building works; the purchase of plate, jewels, books, and rich fabrics; and messenger, informational, and spy networks operating on behalf of the king and the council. It paid the wages of Chamber staff, that is, the staff of the king's inner quarters, including the kings' musicians, fools and jesters; the costs of his entertainments, religious observance and almsgiving; and gambling debts. The books of Henry VIII are often more generous with information than those of Henry VII, recording names rather than just numbers or generic anonymity. Casual rewards ranged from the ephemeral, rewarding the bringers of fruit, fish, and other foodstuffs to the king, to rewards for actions that had a place and influence on the national and international stage. In numerous instances, however, no reason was given for an individual payment and context, if it can be established at all, must be reasoned from other sources.²³ Even a seemingly self-explanatory entry may conceal a longer story. Yet by the mid-1520s the Chamber's preeminence at the heart of government had waned, although it still handled large volumes of cash. The diminution in the Chamber's extra-curricular importance is already apparent in the books before 1521. The story of the eclipse of the Chamber as a leading and semi-autonomous institution, and the disarray into which its records and finances descended mid-century, lies however outside the parameters of the Winchester Project.²⁴ So, too, does the wider manuscript evidence of chamber activity and of the two-way flow of cash and information – what could be loosely described as in and out letters and points of contact with other state institutions and individuals - even if the larger whole makes a fascinating story.

Much of the original archive of the treasurers of the Chamber of Henry VII and Henry VIII has been lost. Within the time frame of 1485-1521, the period covered by the Winchester Project, twelve ledgers are still extant, in the custody of either the British Library or The National Archives. Three chronicle receipts of money into the Chamber; the remainder record payments out and much other matter, mostly bearing on actual and potential sources of revenue, but with an important story to tell of the nature and management of early Tudor government. In addition the archive includes a number of rough accounts kept by the treasurer's clerks; files of warrants to the treasurer ordering payment; a few receipts; a small miscellany of other working documents of the Office; a few summary accounts of revenues that fed into the Chamber; and also third-party recognisances and obligations, or legally binding promises to pay, which were formerly in the custody of the treasurer of the Chamber or of the king himself. Even within The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) the archive has not been treated as a distinct fonds; nor is it held together in a single record class. One reason is its interrupted custodial history.

The 'Queen's Book', that is, the particulars of account of her receiver-general, Richard Decons, for the last year for the Queen's life, was transcribed for the Winchester Project but

²³ For a recent example see Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, 'William Weston, early voyager to the New World', *Historical Research*, vol. 91 (2018), pp. 630-31.

²⁴ Although dated, and for all its many flaws, the summary account in Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*, pp. 236-248, remains useful as an overview.

has no inherent connection with the Chamber archive.²⁵ It will be discussed separately at the end of this section.

The Books of Receipts: Money in

Only three of the king's books of receipts have been preserved. All are for Henry VII. Their outside dates are 1487-1489, 1489-1495, and 1502-1505. Written on thick paper of good quality, they retain their original soft-cover bindings of heavy parchment. The first two (and probably others) of these ledgers were almost certainly created in their pristine state as a blank book by John Heron, who was then just a clerk to the treasurer of the Chamber, Sir Thomas Lovell.²⁶ Not only is the first of these books crudely constructed, but the binding incorporates Office fragments documenting, in Heron's handwriting, removal of specie from several money chests.²⁷ The preamble to this same book rather suggests that the immediately preceding, and now lost, book, contained both receipts and payments.²⁸ From the summer of 1487 receipts and issues were recorded in separate ledgers. The contents of individual books in both series changed over time, and additional sections were added, or ceased. Just when the revenues arising from lands in the hands of the Crown were drawn together in the books as a discrete group is unknown because of the gap in the sequence. But by 1503 payments into the Chamber from receivers and farmers of lands that, for whatever reason, had fallen into the king's hands were grouped together, and those entries written in Latin rather than the English employed for other entries.²⁹ The lists were not individually signed off by the king. Major income streams in all three books came from taxation, from customs and butlerage charged on overseas trade, all being forms of revenue nominally under Exchequer control, and from lands in Crown hands, either directly as rents, profits, and annual leases or 'farms', or indirectly by the exploitation of potential feudal revenues. The most striking shift over time is the increase in the number of entries referring to payments on obligations. At its most basic, this simply means that a document had been drawn up by which a person, sometimes associated with other persons as guarantors, acknowledged that a certain sum was due and payable on a named day or days, and was now making payment. The books name the debtor and the amount – but by no means always the reason lying behind the bond. This, although it should be borne in mind that the reason was not always punitive or coercive, might be the most interesting part of the story.

²⁵ TNA, E36/210.

²⁶ Heron seems to have acted as Lovell's deputy, taking on the whole business of the office, although ultimate responsibility would have remained with Lovell. Traditionally Heron is said to have become treasurer in 1492, based on Lovell's supposed promotion to be treasurer of the household. There is no evidence for either, and Lovell became treasurer of the household only in 1502 or 1503 after a long vacancy in which the cofferer had assumed the duties of the office. Heron's quarterly wages increased from 50s in 1491 to 66s 8d in 1495, remaining at that level until the end of September 1502. They leapt to £10 a quarter in December 1502: TNA, E101/413/2/2, f. 103v; E101/414/6, f. 12r; E101/415/3, f. 104r; British Library [BL], Add. MS 59899, f. 8r. By Michaelmas 1509 those wages had been raised to the very substantial sum of £25 a quarter, BL, Add. MS 21481, f. 13v, a level commanded by subsequent treasurers until at least mid-century. For the argument for the 1492 date, A. P. Newton, *The King's Chamber under the early Tudors*, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 32 (1917), p. 355; cf. Steven Gunn, 'Sir Thomas Lovell (c.1449-1524): a new man in a new Monarchy?' in John L. Watts, ed., *The End of the Middle Ages?* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 129-131.

²⁷ TNA, E101/413/2/1, f. 31A. The scraps were discovered in the course of the Winchester Project.

²⁸ TNA, E101/413/2/1, f. 1r. This seems the most likely reading, although 'boke' could also refer to an audited summary account.

²⁹ They include lands forfeited for treason, the Queen's lands after her death in 1503, and lands fallen in for failure of heirs.

In some instances, a name search in the Books of Payments may yield further details. Other possible sources are numerous, but widely scattered.³⁰

The first two books, and to a diminished extent the third, are calligraphically written, with bold headings to individual entries, and generous spacing. Famously, Henry VII signed both every entry, and also the balances struck approximately quarterly.³¹ However, by the end of 1503, as payments on obligations exploded in number and the entries became cramped, the king was signing only every page. Scribal interventions by the king in these books are few. One addition is significant. The third of the books is fronted by four pages entirely in the king's handwriting, retrospectively and currently transferring to Heron's charge a large quantity of foreign coin and allowing him outgoings that included an instalment of the Scots dowry.³² The Books of Receipts are as much presentation manuscripts as financial statements, although they supply the formal 'charge' element of John Heron's accounts with the king. The books of payments provided his 'discharge'. They were compiled from rough accounts written by the Office clerks, mostly in Latin, of which a very small number still survive, and from Office files that have almost wholly disappeared: the books are a digest of both. It is known that the King's Books of his Receipts do not fully represent the extent of Henry VII's accumulated treasure, or John Heron's accumulated responsibilities.³³

Later books have disappeared. There are, however, numerous fiscal documents, particularly among the Exchequer's own records and those of the nascent prerogative courts, and even within the Books of Payments, that show the flow of cash to the Chamber 1505-1521.³⁴ When he drew up his final balance in the Book of Payments for 1509-18 John Heron charged himself with over one and a half million pounds received on Henry VIII's behalf in the first nine years of that king's reign.³⁵ Equally important as a signpost are the various statutes that provided a legal framework for John Heron's position as the king's 'generall Receyuour' and listed those Crown revenues that were ordinarily to be assigned to the Chamber, and paid

³⁰ The literature on bonds and recognisances is extensive but see, for example, S. Cunningham, 'Loyalty and the usurper: recognisances, the council and allegiance under Henry VII', *Historical Research*, vol. 82 (2009), pp. 459-81; C. J. Harrison, 'The Petition of Edmund Dudley', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 87 (1972), pp. 82-99; Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men*, pp. 77-83; Mark R. Horowitz, 'Policy and prosecution in the reign of Henry VII', *Historical Research*, vol. 82 (2009), pp. 412-58.

³¹ The signatures appear to be batched. However, on at least one occasion Heron had to format an entry around the king's sprawling sign manual already written in the book: TNA, E101/413/2/3, f. 17v.

³² TNA, E101/413/2/3, ff. 1r-2v. The king's eldest daughter, Margaret, married James IV by proxy on 25 January 1503 and in person on 8 August 1503. Similar entries were made in the now lost book for 1505-1509: cf. British Library [BL], Add. MS 21481, ff. 348r, v.

³³ See David Grummitt, 'Henry VII, Chamber Finance and the "New Monarchy": some new Evidence', *Historical Research*, vol. 72 (1999), pp. 229-43. Grummitt does not, however, mention that Heron must also have used the original bills held in the Office – even allowing for the substitution of English for the Latin of the clerks' accounts, there is some variation in the detail provided by Heron to the king. Grummitt's account was convincingly modified by David Starkey in a paper delivered at the Chamber Book Conference held at the University of Winchester 28-30 August 2018: hereafter cited as Starkey, 'King, Court and Chamber'. The authors thank Dr. Starkey for sharing a text version of his presentation.

³⁴ For example, J. S. Brewer's Introduction to the first edition of *Letters and Papers* tabulated calculations made from the tellers rolls of the Exchequer of transfers of money to the Chamber 1509-1514. Reprinted 2nd edn., Vol. 1 pt 3, pp. lxxii-iv.

³⁵ TNA, E36/215, p. 577; BL, Add. MS 21481, f. 288r. The following book, for 1518-21, does not include a final balance, possibly a consequence of John Heron's failing health.

there rather than in the Exchequer of Receipt. Much of that list continued practices already established or evident before 1509.³⁶

The Books of Payments: part I: Money out and the development of the Books

Books of Payments, either in the form of the original master ledgers audited and signed off by the king, or the copy books created contemporaneously by the Office clerks, survive continuously from the beginning of October 1495 to the end of April 1521. All have been transcribed, including those running in duplicate. Fittingly perhaps, the last transcribed page of entries of incidental payments for April 1521 includes Henry VIII's offering at the annual mass of requiem for his father, Henry VII.³⁷ Whilst further books document Chamber activity for the remainder of Henry VIII's reign, they survive only as a discontinuous sequence, and their date compass falls outside the Winchester Project.

The earliest of Henry VII's books of payments, from the first years of the reign to Michaelmas 1491, had been lost by the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The evidence for this is circumstantial. Roman numerals in a hand of that period are inked on the top left corner of the only three books that still retain their original covers. That for 1495-1497 is marked II, for 1497-1499 III, and 1499-1502 IIII. The book that we will call 1491-1495 was still extant in the second half of the eighteenth century, and was presumably marked I. It has since been lost: of which more below. A selection of entries from this book, biased towards the picaresque rather than the pedestrian, was copied with variable accuracy in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The main source for these is a pocketbook compiled by the antiquarian and Exchequer clerk Craven Ord (1755-1832). The notebook was purchased by the British Museum in 1829. While it has not been transcribed for the Project in its entirety, since it repeats itself, the principal sequence of extracts from December 1491 to its end point of Michaelmas 1505 has been included.³⁸ From December 1491 to the end of September 1495 over 550 entries signalled, like the extant but later originals, by the word 'Item', have been thus preserved. Ord's post-1495 transcripts may be judged against the original books.³⁹ Other than the extracts, there are just two major pointers to Chamber expenditure prior to Michaelmas 1495. Sir Thomas Lovell's accounts for receipts from 4 July 1487 to Michaelmas, 29 September, 1489 showed a surplus of income over expenditure of £5739 17s 2d, 'all Receiptes charged and Paymentes allowed', which suggests expenditure

³⁶ See Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*, pp. 228-9, 478-83; *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3, p. 2 (1 Hen. 8 c.3); pp. 68-73 (4 Hen. 8 c.18). The act of 1512, which established the Court of General Surveyors, included a clause that formally appointed Heron as Treasurer of the Chamber. See also the long list of statutes in Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*, pp. 517-22, although these cover a wider range of topics. Dietz, *English Government Finance*, pp. 82-4, essayed a detailed breakdown of receipts for 1504-5,

³⁷ TNA, E36/216, f. 132r. The two pages of payments following are of regular monthly payments of wages, plus a substantial transfer in gold of £2,500 to the king.

³⁸ A less comprehensive series of entries was recorded in the back of the book, but the Project's editor of that manuscript reports that it contains no additional material. A second notebook, now BL, Add. MS 7100, contains similar transcripts from the reign of Henry VIII.

³⁹ Apart from Ord's obvious and not-so-obvious errors, he failed to understand the dating of entries in the books. Unless written as a sequence of dates these are, for the reign of Henry VII, most usually dated by week (or part of week) ending, not week beginning.

over the same period of £30,851 16s 11d.⁴⁰ Largely unnoticed by historians, the following book, ending at Michaelmas 1495, contains an estimate drawn up by John Heron for 'ordinary payments' anticipated for the accounting year Michaelmas 1490-1491. The much amended total of over £4000 includes wages for musicians and others, annual wages of £10 for John Heron himself, and an allowance for daily mass offerings, all of which are likely to have been accurately assessed and duly paid; but the round figure of £1000 allowed for each of casual 'rewards', and 'diuerse necessariis' bought for the king, must surely have been a guesstimate.⁴¹

The Books of Payments are more complex in their content and make-up than the Books of Receipts. Like the Books of Receipts, they were 'engrossed' and fair written in real time from subsidiary documents and rough accounts. To a far greater extent than the Books of Receipts the master ledgers were working books, repeatedly consulted and updated even whilst they were still current. They were annotated by both Heron and Henry VII, the king making alterations, additions – and, just occasionally, mistakes. His general practice was to sign off the payments weekly, although inevitably there were variations in the periodicity. Clerk and king came together to audit the books approximately quarterly, ensuring in the process the safe custody and transfer of any outstanding credit balance.⁴² Henry VIII initially followed his father's practice, mostly signing each page and total, albeit with a wayward signature that only gradually assumed its more regular form. By the end of his first year, the king was signing just once a month. He signed off also the supplementary matter recorded towards the back of the books. Yet occasional interventions in the hand of the king suggest that he read, not merely signed, the warrants that authorised the treasurer to make payments. Part of the difference is structural. John Heron made frequent large issues of money from the Chamber direct to the king, for the king's own use: and one surviving account of the king's privy purse indicates that Henry VIII paid the same attention to those more personal accounts that his father had done towards those of the Chamber.⁴³

From at least 1505 the books were kept in duplicate, with the copy being written out by the clerks, and not by the treasurer. The earliest known of these duplicate books is a hybrid, including running totals abstracted from two books, and just six months worth of payments all copied from the master ledger. The supplementary sections were included. The book itself was signed periodically by Henry VII, which means that he was fully cognisant of its existence, and could have encouraged or required its creation.⁴⁴ Thereafter, the copy books have no signatures, few signs of use, and inevitably occasional errors or misunderstandings

⁴⁰ TNA, E101/413/2/1 f. 28r, E101/413/2/2 f. 1r. Receipts were totalled and charged only to 12 September 1489.

⁴¹ E101/413/2/2, [unnumbered] f. 103v. Modern foliation remarks folio 93 as the end of the book, and does not number the blank pages following. The list is noticed by Frederick Dietz, but without document reference or discussion, other than the total and that the payments included 'Espies': Dietz, *English Government Finance 1485-1558*, p. 84.

⁴² The process was explored in depth in by David Starkey in his paper, 'King, Court and Chamber' delivered to the 2018 Chamber Book Conference.

⁴³ *The Privy Purse Expenses of Henry the Eighth*, ed. Nicholas Harris Nicolas (London, 1827), now BL, Add. MS 20030; abstracted in *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. 5., pp. 747-62. David Starkey has shown that this is an account of Henry Norris, the Groom of the Stool and not, as Richardson believed, of the treasurer of the Chamber: Starkey, 'Intimacy and innovation', pp.94-5. Former owners of the manuscript include Sir Orlando Bridgeman (1606-1674), who obtained it 'by chance', Peter Le Neve (1661-1729), and a Chancery Lane bookseller, William Pickering (1796-1854).

⁴⁴ BL, Add. MS 21480. The source books are TNA, E101/415/3 and BL, Add. MS 59899.

introduced by the copying process, as well as differences in orthography reflecting the personal preferences of the scribes.⁴⁵ The copy ledgers incorporate also the marginalia and other annotation written against entries in the themed sections of the master ledgers – or at least they should. The large book for 1509-1518 follows this pattern.⁴⁶ Those for 1505-1509, and 1518-1521 do not.⁴⁷ They carry over marginalia copied from the immediately preceding books but little thereafter.⁴⁸ The death of Henry VII and the review and dismantling of much the financial legacy of his punitive regime of recognisances and obligations, a review in which Heron as one of the commissioners took part, may explain the first. The second omission is problematic, but the breakdown in John Heron's health, and the interregnum in office that followed, suggest that his close oversight was crucial to the efficient running of the Office. Duplication of the record at a time when the Chamber was experiencing a massive expansion both in funds and as a centralised information system made sense. It gave both the king and the treasurer access to current information in its digested format. By the late 1490s John Heron remained based largely at Westminster, whilst the king was still itinerant, and at times significantly so.⁴⁹ Although perhaps not a consideration at the time, a second ledger provided security against loss. The master ledger for 1505-1509 had been lost by the late eighteenth century.⁵⁰ The original ledger would have told a modern user more – but in its absence the copy ledger remains invaluable.⁵¹

The Books of Payments: part 2: Bonds, Debts, and Memoranda

All the surviving books 1495-1521 contain one or more discrete sections following on from the register of payments, which was always the largest single element within the books. The additional divisions of the books were originally named and identified by protruding "bookmark" tags, many of which have been removed in the course of later rebinding, leaving only a glue outline on the page.⁵² The bookmarks facilitated the use of the books by Heron, his clerks, and, to at least 1509, by the king. They are contemporaneous with the books, since entries occasionally overspill on to the tabs.⁵³ The various sections do not

⁴⁵ TNA, E36/214-216. E36/215 is the copy ledger from BL Add. MS 21481. The editors on the Winchester project discussed, and thought it possible, that the copies were created by dictation from the master ledger. There is no proof either way. For an annotation by Henry VII, TNA, E36/214, f. 191v (p. 394).

⁴⁶ TNA, E36/215.

⁴⁷ TNA, E36/214, E36/216.

⁴⁸ The latest marginalia concerning payments made are for February 1507. It may be coincidence, but this is just before the king's serious illness of March 1507.

⁴⁹ In the 1490s Heron may have travelled with the king, although periodic changes in handwriting in the books suggest that at times a clerk travelled in his place. On the absences and progresses of 1500, 1501 and 1502 daily expenditure was recorded in riding books, which have not survived, but were audited en bloc at the same time as the ledgers. The Books of Payments record only the weekly totals. One of Heron's servants regularly served as a clerk at court, and was supplied from the Jewel House treasury with sufficient cash to meet casual payments authorised by the king.

⁵⁰ Craven Ord, in his notebook, forlornly noticed 'No more books' after his last entry for 27 September 1505: BL, Add. MS 7099, p. 96. Perhaps fortunately, he seems to have been unaware of the volume then in the custody of the Chamberlains of the Exchequer of Receipt, and now TNA, E36/214.

⁵¹ TNA, E36/214.

⁵² The term used by the clerks was 'labells'. The Payments section, always at the beginning, did not require a label.

⁵³ E.g. TNA, E101/414/6, f. 131r; E101/414/16, ff. 117r, 124r.

always appear in the same order within the books, nor is any section necessarily a continual feature throughout the series (Fig. 1).⁵⁴ The nature of the content recorded in any one section might also change over time. A debt was always a debt. But the section titled Memoranda included entries concerning potential revenue and past omissions and derelictions, matters of high policy or requiring executive action, auctions of grants of office and favour, the deposit of records with John Heron for safe-keeping in the Jewel House, and the occasional matter that seems too slight to command the attention of a king. A Recognisance was consistent in that it almost always bound other guarantors in addition to the principal party for the performance of the thing or money required: but what that thing was, or what that payment was for, changed out of all recognition over time.⁵⁵ Whereas the earlier recognisances are more overtly varied, those entered in the books from 1509 are entirely recognisances for loans, a trend already apparent before Henry VII's death. The first series included bonds given for proper conduct in office, or to do or not to do a certain

⁵⁴ The section order has been homogenised for purposes of comparison. All the books, however, place the payments first.

⁵⁵ Both obligations and recognisances were bonds. Mark Horowitz distinguished the latter as 'an obligation of record' entered into before a court or record or authorised official: Horowitz, 'Policy and Prosecution', p. 414. This slightly puts the cart before the horse although a number of the recognisances in the Chamber Books were indeed enrolled in Chancery to be 'of record'. Horowitz acknowledges that there are other definitions. It would be unwise to be dogmatic, and his extended descriptions, with examples, are helpful.

Figure 1: Books of Payments: the Named Divisions of the Books

Reference (Master ledger)	TNA, E101/414/6	TNA, E101/414/16	TNA, E101/415/3	BL, Add MS 59899	-	BL, Add MS 21481	-
(Copy Ledger)	-	-	BL, Add MS 21480 (a)		TNA, E36/214	TNA, E36/215	TNA, E36/216
Outside Dates	1495-1497	1497-1499	1499-1502	1502- 1505	1505- 1509	1509- 1518	1518- 1521
Payments				(a)			
Cofferer, Loans to	-					(b)	-
Revenues of Lands					-	-	-
Recognisances						-	-
Loans (c)	-	-	-	-			
Obligations							
Tallies						-	-
Debts						-	-
Wards						-	-
Liveries of Lands	-					-	-
Memoranda					-	-	-
Other	(d)	(e)	(f)		(g)	(h)	
Index C16/C17					-	(i)	-

- (a) BL, Add MS 21480 'Payments' has only running totals and quarterly totals to 29 April 1505, copied from E101/415/3 and BL, Add MS 59899. Then individual payments as BL Add MS 59899.
- (b) Initially included as a section in 1509 but then abandoned. One entry for December 1509 remains in TNA, E36/215, p. 293. The previous leaf, carrying the entries from May 1509 and the section bookmark, was cut out, as noted by the scribe of the volume. The entire section is lost from the master ledger, BL, Add. MS 21481.
- (c) Bookmark in BL MS Add. 21481 fo. 289 'Recoignisaunces for lone money'. The section signature at the foot of the same page is 'Lone money'.
- (d) Notes on foreign coinage delivered: in hand of Henry VII (fo. 1r); subsidiary document(s) Repayments 1495-97 of money borrowed by the Queen (fos. 105r-106r)
- (e) Subsidiary document(s): clerk's memorandum to search for information concerning Richmond friary (fo. 80r(4))
- (f) Subsidiary document(s): acknowledgement in hand of Elizabeth of York of days of repayment of money loaned to her (fo. 250r); annotated memorandum concerning arrears on a clerical tenth, diocese of Exeter (fo. 225r)
- (g) Aphorism in hand of scribe (fo. 333v)
- (h) Subsidiary document(s): Copy warrant concerning gold coin to be transferred to Calais for the wars (BL, Add MS 21481, fos. 347r-348v; cf. E101/413/2/3). TNA, E36/215 makes reference to the warrant, citing a folio number that is nonsense in context, since it applies only to the master ledger.
- (i) Index is only in BL, Add MS 21481

thing, or for allegiance to the king. In all these instances the stated penalty would only become payable if the terms of the recognisance were breached. Others were primarily arrangements to pay, either for the price of the king's favour or in discharge of a fine; latterly others again were indeed for loans: some for the king's engagement in continental money markets, and others to be put to use in the Mediterranean trade, the export being wool and the import wine, rich fabrics, alum, and other desired goods which, it was hoped, would lead to an expansion in his customs revenues. Many of the post-1509 recognisances are more opaque. They included loans to consortia of Italian merchants to be used in the money markets and in the Mediterranean trade, and advances that in an earlier age would have been called prests, requiring a final account, for the purchase of arms and victuals for the king's wars. One of the most striking and enormous debts, for which the recognisances were several times renegotiated, was for the repayment to Henry VIII of the dowry originally given to the king's sister Mary for her marriage to Louis XII of France. Repayment was the price of her marriage to Charles Brandon after Louis's death.⁵⁶

The books 1495-1509 all include sections titled for Wards and for Liveries. Since the entries are not individually dated, it is not clear whether they are represent pieces of information which could be used to trigger administrative action directed out of Chancery, or whether they are derived from inquisitions already taken, although the latter is more likely. Either way, they represent future revenues that could be exploited to the Crown's profit by the sale of the ward and marriage of an heir who was still a minor, and, in the case of Livery, a composition for entry into lands held in chief. The same headings do occur after 1509 – but only as sub-groups within the larger body of Obligations. This was because a sale or composition had been agreed, and in consequence an arrangement made for payment into the Chamber, either as a lump sum or more usually by instalments. The entries were no longer agenda items, that is things 'to be done'. The alteration reflects administrative change beyond the Chamber, with the gradual development of a separate court of Wards and Liveries, a process that began in 1504 but had even earlier roots.

Memoranda disappeared as a discrete section in 1505, when the king delegated specific responsibilities to named councillors whilst retaining ultimate oversight. The Memoranda are perhaps best seen as a disparate agenda of things, great and small, that Henry VII wished to keep in mind, based both on observed necessity and on information reaching him. Some, perhaps all, of the entries were dictated to Heron by the king. Some, but certainly not all, were dealt with, either by executive action or, where appropriate, by a financial composition with the king, leading to an obligation or recognisance setting out the terms and dates of expected payment. Unless paid immediately in full, an abstract of the written instruments would then be entered in the appropriate section of the book(s).

The lists of lands in the king's hands likewise disappeared from the books after 1505. The section had been made redundant. Sir Robert Southwell and Roger Leyborne assumed oversight of audit, in an arrangement that was the precursor to the Court of General Surveyors. A summary of revenues arising was presented to the king in the form of declared accounts. Whilst some revenues went into

⁵⁶ S. J. Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk 1484-1545* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 35-8, 59-62. Although mostly concerned with a slightly later date, R. B. Outhwaite, 'The Trials of Foreign Borrowing: the English Crown and the Antwerp Money Market in the Mid-Sixteenth Century', *Economic History Review* (1966), pp. 289-305 is useful, as is the short section dealing with Richard Gresham, the father of Thomas Gresham, in John Guy, *Gresham's Law: the Life and World of Queen Elizabeth I's Banker* (London, 2019), pp. 8-11; for Italian merchants, M. E. Bratchel, 'Italian Merchant Organization and Business Relationships in Early Tudor London', *The Journal of European Economic History*, vol. 7 (1978), pp. 5-32. For Henry VII and the alum trade, Penn, *Winter King*, pp. 201-4, 250-2.

the Exchequer, most were paid over to John Heron for the king's use. Against each such transfer of funds Henry VII noted in his own hand that Heron had rendered account.⁵⁷ Recognisances as a section disappeared after 1509. The same instrument, with very different motivation, had expanded from its earlier periodic use by Henry VII's reign, to become an identifiable section, Recognisances for Loans, branching off from the general run of Recognisances, in Henry VII's last years, and finally a discrete and significant register within the books after May 1509. And whilst John Heron expected the book opened in May 1509 to contain sections dedicated to tallies and to debts, as had been his practice for the past fifteen years or so, historic information about debts entered in the books prior to Henry VII's death was almost immediately subject to review, and many (but not all) debts were cancelled.⁵⁸ In the event, neither category was retained as a themed division, and the pages initially reserved for those entries were used as overspill to continue the record of payments.⁵⁹ This was also the fate of the division intended for loans to the Cofferer. The scribe of the copy ledger noted that the first leaf, including the 'labell' had been cut out, leaving only a stub. Those two pages must have been fully written, since the following and still extant page includes an entry for 1 December 1509.⁶⁰ The section is completely missing from the master ledger, and the entry of payments (for 1514) continues uninterrupted.⁶¹

Over the course of the whole accounting period represented by any one book, the entries in these sections were heavily annotated. Often the notes, heavily abbreviated, are of staged payments, identifying the date and amount of money paid into the chamber against the outstanding debt. Other notes cancel an entry, sometimes with further explanatory detail; record its registration in another part of the book; indicate executive action, or that the accumulated payments by instalment balanced the amount due.⁶² In the left hand margin notes of cancellation (most usually *vac[at]*), or of the complete discharge of an outstanding sum (*sol[utum] = paid*), both being words written in a larger script, predominate. The entries of "sol" were often, but not always, batched. They are likely to be part of the audit process, but assisted also in the preparation of the books for copying. Heron kept a running note that he had checked a page and, at the end of each section, that the relevant entries had been copied over to a new book. It was not a simple process. It was important at the time. It needs to be understood even today if the books are to be used accurately. The clerks and, if infrequently, John Heron, got it wrong from time to time. The layering of marginalia over time, and necessary alterations to the wording used in the entry itself, made the copying process a trap for the unwary. Cancelled entries, and those in which full payment had been made, were not copied over. A visual line of cancellation sometimes reinforced the message. Entries on which no action had occurred could be copied as they stood. They were still valid: memoranda in their broadest sense. The remainder required adjustment. Debts that had only been partially paid off had to be recalculated to show the 'remain', the amount still outstanding. It is this revised sum, reached after deducting monies already paid, that would be entered in the right hand column of the new book. If instalments were originally spread over several years, then the new book would usually record only

⁵⁷ TNA, E36/212-3, *passim*.

⁵⁸ For a preliminary survey of the cancellation of bonds and recognisances, Horowitz, 'Policy and prosecution', pp. 450-58.

⁵⁹ For the signatures for Tallies and Debts written in 1509 at the bottom of the designated initial section leaves as a direction to insert a bookmark tag, BL, MS Add. 21481, ff. 272r, 282r.

⁶⁰ TNA, E36/215 p. 293.

⁶¹ BL, Add. MS 21481, ff. 146v-147r. This manuscript has been rebound at least twice in library bindings, and the gatherings are now mounted on paper guards.

⁶² Once a sum due under the terms of an obligation had been paid in full, the written instrument should have been returned to the debtor. If the deed had also been enrolled on the Close Rolls of Chancery, then the Master of the Rolls was informed, and that copy of the instrument cancelled.

the number of years left. A payment due at 'Michaelmas next', or Michaelmas in a named year that was also the commencing year of the new book, would be reworded to become, once copied over, 'this Michaelmas'. There might be other minor changes to the wording, not least if an entry originally in one section of the book had been transferred to another. In the new book immediately following, all such copied material would be entered under the date of 1 October: although in 1497, a year twice disrupted by dangerous rebellion, both audit and the copying process began early and urgently, and the copied material is dated 1 August.⁶³ In 1495 and in 1497 the copying clerk was John Heron himself. Thereafter the task was delegated to one of the junior clerks of the office, offering in the new book an easy visual clue to the point at which the copied material ends, and new material begins. It is a process that means that a single entry may appear, in a form slightly altered from its first point of origin, in more than one book and in more than one place within a single book. It is also a process that might suggest a tentative and very partial reconstruction of back sections of the lost book for 1491-1495. Almost certainly, those sections would have included all the elements present in the book of 1495-1497. However, because the scribe of October 1495 appears to be John Heron throughout, the visual signals that distinguish between material copied, and material added, are not clear-cut. Even given that entries dealt with in full would not be carried over, it seems unlikely that this additional material was introduced into the books before 1494 or early 1495. That the lost book included material additional to the payments could of course be an illusion: but that too cannot simply be assumed. The section titled Recognisances was not present in 1495-1497 but appears fully formed in the book for 1497-1499. 'Cofferer' was, however, an afterthought in that same book. On 1 July 1499 Heron abstracted the essential details of an agreement of 17 June 1499 establishing a regular cycle of loans to the Cofferer of the king's household, and the arrangements for repayment of the loan. It was entered on to a blank page facing the first of the regular supplementary sections. When, just a few weeks later, John Heron prepared the next ledger, that for 1499-1502, 'Cofferer' appears as a regular section and was bookmarked accordingly.⁶⁴ Two things, however, seem fairly certain from the perspective of 1495. One is that the use of the ledgers as a treasure chest of things that the king wished to memorialise was fairly new. The second is that John Heron did not, indeed could not, foresee how much this aspect of his work would expand. When he prepared the book 1495-7 for active use, he seriously underestimated how much space would be required for the register of Obligations and of Memoranda. In consequence, he had to accommodate the overspill in blank pages left between the 'Payments' and the 'Revenues' section that commenced the back matter contained in the book. The result is that the overspill of Obligations now reads backwards from Michaelmas 1496, whilst the Memoranda overspill more conventionally reads forwards with room to spare.⁶⁵ Heron did not make the same mistake again.

Custody and Use to the mid-twentieth century

The Chamber Books began their lives as the personal property of the king. He did not write them – there were clerks to do that – although he might write *in* them. The king appointed the treasurer of

⁶³ For the rebellions of 1497, Ian Arthurson, *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy 1491-1499* (Stroud, 1994).

⁶⁴ TNA, E101/414/16, f. 80v(3); E101/415/3, f. 141r; indenture enrolled on the Close Rolls of Chancery: *Calendar of Close Rolls 1485-1500*, pp. 321-2.

⁶⁵ TNA, E101/414/6, fos 91(3)v-92v (Memoranda); fos 100v-97r (Obligations). The reason for the bizarre numbering is that the modern foliation of the books ignored blank pages. An earlier, but still nineteenth or twentieth century, foliation correctly included them, but has since largely been erased, contrary to then accepted Public Record Office practice. It has not proved possible to re-foliate. Such evidence of earlier foliation as is visible, or can safely be inferred, has been preserved in the transcripts.

the Chamber by word of mouth and not by letters patent, and he was recompensed by payment from the chamber, or by the equivalent in grants of land or fees. The Exchequer might furnish funds to the Chamber: indeed might furnish rather a lot of funds – but it had no official oversight. Even at the most elementary level it was on occasion John Heron as clerk or treasurer who informed the Exchequer that monies had been paid into the Chamber – in order to establish an audit trail, and give some legal protection to the payee. The Exchequer, on its part, would then raise an assignment: but did so retrospectively, reversing the customary procedures. In short, documents can tell a tale. But they can also lie. *Caveat emptor* – to read is not necessarily to believe.

Certain questions then arise. Why are several books of the treasurer of the Chamber now in the National Archives, and classed as records of the King's Remembrancer? And why are other records of that same Chamber now classed as Records of the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer? The short answer to this is: a tale in progress. And why, indeed, are some records of that same Chamber, of the same period, now in the British Library? That, too, is a tale in progress. But both revolve on a story of neglect, peculation, double standards, official inertia and abdication of official responsibility, antiquarian bibliomania, occasional philanthropy – and the expenditure of a great deal of public money. It is not a pretty story, but it is one that has had consequences both for the survival of the archive and for the use by historians over time of the Chamber Books and related documents.

At the time, and for some years after their first creation, the books were both working documents and recent and still current archives.⁶⁶ This was as true of the post 1509 books as of those of the years of Henry VII's active intervention. By c. 1500 the Chamber Books spawned, as well as being created from, working documents; accounts feeding into the books increased in number; and in the king's last years written warrants proliferated, although they are unlikely to have completely edged out more the informal written and oral mandates of earlier years. Henry VIII, and on occasion Thomas Wolsey as his *alter ego*, made much more use of written warrants, some of which survive and usefully augment the brief record entries of the books.

Throughout the period of Thomas Lovell and John Heron's tenure of the treasurership of the Chamber, it is likely that the original books (see Fig. 1) were in the custody of the king. In 1507 a record room was furnished within the Tower to take the growing, and increasingly disparate but all-encompassing archive, although the room must have been vacated for that purpose well before 1542, when the shelves and cupboards were removed.⁶⁷ Since the books were written incrementally custody was less clinically neat than such an arrangement might suggest; but the office copy was the duplicate book written out by the treasurer's clerks, was not signed by the king, and was constantly available.⁶⁸ It would have been kept in a place certain which, prior to 1512, was the Chamber office in the Jewel House at Westminster.⁶⁹ Unless it is an accidental duplicate entry, new blank ledgers for the King's Books of Payments and of Receipts had been purchased by one of Heron's clerks by the

⁶⁶ One example of early archival use is a search by one of John Heron's clerks for evidence of payment for land acquired for the Richmond friars. The clerk left behind his note to himself, and it remains interleaved in the Book of Payments for 1497-99, TNA, E101/414/16, fo 80r(4); cf. TNA, E101/415/3, f. 95v, which is the 'wrong' date but would match the description of the query. Building works, this time at Greenwich, also attracted the attention of a later researcher, who drew a manicule (a printer's finger) as a *Nota bene* against two entries referring to building work done at Greenwich. It is undatable, but evidence of later use, TNA, E101/415/3, ff. 13v, 23v.

⁶⁷ TNA, E36/214, f. 85v, cited Simon Thurley, *Houses of Power* (London, 2017) p. 85 but with an incorrect reference; John Bayley, *the History and Antiquities of the Tower of London* (2 vols, 1821), vol. 1, p. xxxiii.

⁶⁸ It was not a foolproof system. As already noted, both the 1505-9 and the 1518-21 books were not fully updated. Office files might have supplied the deficiency, but it would have been a painful process.

⁶⁹ The location was explored in David Starkey's 2018 conference paper, 'King, Court and Chamber'.

beginning of May 1509 and put to immediate use; which would mean that the second set, acquired by 10 June, was for the copy books which were to be written up and kept in the Office.⁷⁰

The palace fire of 1512 led to the provision of new quarters for Heron and the Chamber office within the Westminster complex. Brian Tuke, treasurer 1528-1545, operated day to day out of his London house. He continued to use the Tower treasury as a place of deposit for excess receipts.⁷¹ He perused Heron's books as he would an instruction manual, which suggests but does not prove that he had full access to the original books.⁷²

The route taken to archival storage in the Exchequer at Westminster is guesswork, made more difficult by the removal of original covers and rebinding over the course of three centuries. By mid-century the books were being audited, not by the king, but by the court of General Surveyors, and could have been caught up in that archive on the dissolution of the court; deposit might have been ordered, not least in the attempt to settle William Cavendish's debts; or the books and archive could have become research material for one of the various Debt Commissions that combed through possible sources that might potentially raise money for the cash-strapped governments of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth: and so on to the similar schemes of Robert Cecil under James I. There are several reasons why this last route might be the most likely explanation for the King's Remembrancer's custody of the original books, rather than the chaos theory of Exchequer custody, which is an entirely legitimate alternative. The King's (Queen's) Remembrancer bore much of the burden for process on debt owed to the Crown, other than arrears on Crown lands. Cecil, and probably earlier commissioners, envisaged that sums due on undischarged debts and bonds could be extracted from the heirs of the original debtor. The archive of the various commissions is very incomplete, both in terms of survival and of modern cataloguing and access. But there is one pointer. All the original books of Payments, and one of the books of Receipts, include a name index to Obligations and to Recognisances, written in a hand of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The indexes were all compiled by just one scribe, who also foliated the relevant sections of the books in order to facilitate reference.⁷³ So tedious an exercise is most likely to have had an administrative purpose.

Unlike the Tower Record Office (Chancery) or the Chapter House, which was ultimately the responsibility of the Chamberlains of the Receipt of the Exchequer, the King's Remembrancer had neither a dedicated record room nor a dedicated Keeper of the Records. Certain records were well kept – but in general the custodial history of records of the king's remembrancer in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was at best inglorious and at worst culpably abominable. It is unsurprising therefore that, before the later eighteenth century, the books seem not to have had literary use.

The copy books, or at least the three books 1505-1521, and the clerks' 'blotting books' – the rough accounts, followed a different route, into the Treasury of the Receipt.⁷⁴ This has some internal logic

⁷⁰ BL, Add. MS 21481, ff. 4v, 6r.

⁷¹ G. R. Elton, *Star Chamber Stories* (London, 1958), pp. 114-146; Starkey, 'King, Court and Chamber'; TNA, SP1/121, f. 211.

⁷² Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*, p. 161.

⁷³ Fig. 1 and TNA, E101/413/2/2. In the Books of Payments the indexes are written on blank leaves within the books; that for the Book of Receipts is now a supplementary pamphlet.

⁷⁴ TNA, E36/214-6, E36/123. That other of the clerks' rough accounts are classed as records of the King's Remembrancer is not significant. The record class E101 is an artificial creation, including, if often unrecognised, records properly belonging to other departments of the Exchequer, including the Treasury of

if the connection with the Jewel House, or John Heron's new counting house at Westminster, were maintained. The route perhaps matters less in the scale of centuries than the fact that these books were delivered into an archive with long and, by the standards of the day, honourable tradition of custody, relatively secure storage, and periodically was under the charge of keeper/custodians who were genuinely interested in the records. Physical conditions of storage were often less than ideal, as is evident from the decay of the Queen's book and the clerks' accounts. But scholarly searches were possible, if not always welcome. They were also expensive – since the clerks demanded their fees.⁷⁵ The two archival strands briefly came together at the end of the eighteenth century with the first known published use of the Henry VII Chamber Books, almost at the same time that the Record Commission first noted the existence of the manuscript originals and their place of storage.

In 1797 George Chalmers acknowledged the help of an Exchequer sworn clerk, Craven Ord, for supplying transcripts of historic payments for plays derived from entries found in the Chamber Books of Henry VII.⁷⁶ Just two years later, the posthumously published final volume of Robert Henry's *History of Great Britain* included a short list of payments drawn from those same books.⁷⁷ The executors credited the learned antiquary Thomas Astle (Keeper of the Records in the Tower, and, in 1775, the editor of the text of Henry VII's will).⁷⁸ Astle's list is a mess, although it shows evidence of wider reading in the books. It includes extracts 7-8 Henry VII (1491-1493), taken from a now lost book but with the earliest entries wrongly attributed to 9 Henry VII (1493-4); and a second list abstracted from the original book for 1497-1499, which is still extant. The earlier list includes a very small number of items not found in Craven Ord's book of extracts. The extracts for 1497-99 incorporate a mangled and misplaced reference to John Savernake, a musician first found in 1518 in the copy book E36/216, which at that time was in the Chapter House, and of whose existence Ord seems to have been unaware.⁷⁹ Astle, if it was he, very clearly recorded that the earlier (and now lost book) was in the custody of the King's Remembrancer.⁸⁰ At this point, the story, according to Anonymous of the Temple, gets darker.⁸¹ For he says that Astle's list was bound up with Ord's notebook, which had been acquired by the British Museum – and that all reference to the custody of the King's Remembrancer had been erased from the note, but that the writing could still just be made out. Anonymous went on to point to the sale by Ord of manuscripts earlier acknowledged to

the Exchequer of Receipt. By and large it is doubly miscellaneous- a class of 'Miscellaneous Accounts' created from the 'Ancient Miscellanea' of the Exchequer.

⁷⁵ See for example Elizabeth M. Hallam, 'Problems with record keeping in early eighteenth century London: some pictorial representations of the state paper office, 1705-1706', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 6 (1979), pp. 219-22; Neville Williams, 'The work of Peter Le Neve at the Chapter House, Westminster', *Journal. Soc. Archivists* vol. 1 (1957), pp. 125-31; M. M. Condon and Elizabeth M. Hallam, 'Government Printing of the Public Records in the eighteenth century', *Journal. Soc. Archivists* vol. 7 (1984), pp. 352-7, 364-6.

⁷⁶ George Chalmers, *An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare Papers* (London, 1797), Appendix III, pp. 616-7; N. W. Bawcutt, 'Craven Ord Transcripts of Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book in the Folger Shakespeare Library', *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 14 (1984), p. 85. All the entries cited by Chalmers can be found in BL Add. MS 7099.

⁷⁷ Robert Henry, *The History of Great Britain* (3rd edn, 12 vols.), vol. 12, pp. 465-8, 483.

⁷⁸ For Astle, Nigel Ramsay, 'Astle, Thomas (1735-1803)', *ODNB*. Henry VII's will was one of several royal wills stored in the Treasury of the Receipt.

⁷⁹ For Savernake, E36/216, ff. 24r, 27v; Henry, *History*, p. 465.

⁸⁰ Henry, *History*, pp. 465, 466. Under the pandemic restraints of 2020, it has not been possible to check for the list in the two notebooks now in the British Library, BL, Add. MSS 7099, 7100.

⁸¹ *The Public Advantages of entrusting the records of the Exchequer....to the Irresponsible Custody of the King's Remembrancer, determined by the present condition of that Officer's own Records. In a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Record Commission. By a Member of the Temple* (Henry Butterworth, London, 1834). The pamphlet usefully quotes extracts from the various reports of the Record Commissioners – which were then weaponised to further the author's arguments.

be in public custody. His account of the fate of the original chamber books is actually muddled at this point, not least because of the brevity of the sale catalogues – but the moral of the tale of Astle’s extracts, if true, is that it suggests a deliberate attempt by Ord to cover his tracks.

Four of the original Chamber Books now in the British Library, of which three have been edited for the Winchester Project, came, although not directly, from Ord’s collection. They do not include the 1491-1495 book. By the mid-1830s Ord was widely reputed to have helped himself from the records supposedly in his care.⁸² It would not have been difficult. The catalogue of Sir Thomas Phillips collection, with its extended descriptions, rather than the heavily abbreviated and generic entries in the auction catalogues of Ord’s Library, indicates just how many of Ord’s manuscripts were strays from official custody. What the catalogues cannot show, however, is how many of those manuscripts were legitimately acquired, according to the mores of Ord’s day, by purchase or by exchange with fellow collectors – nor the number for which Ord was the first owner and, by association and opportunity, culpable. Once escaped from public custody the authorities made no effort to reclaim documents: they had become private property.

Craven Ord followed family tradition by entering the Exchequer Office as a side clerk in 1770. Promotion was by strict order of seniority. He became a sworn clerk in 1780 – that is, one of the more senior clerks in the office. He was promoted as second secondary in 1820, which gave him official custody of certain of the Office’s ancient records – including two of Henry VII’s Books of Receipts, the second discovered some time after 1800. Ord succeeded David Burton Fowler as first secondary in 1828, by which time he was himself in poor health.⁸³ His manuscript collection was dispersed 1829-30 over the course of three sales held before his death.

Two of the Chamber Books from Ord’s collection, the hybrid copy of the books of payments for 1499-1505, and the original book for 1509-1518, were acquired by the British Museum in 1856 from the estate of Henry Belward Ray.⁸⁴ Both manuscripts have, unfortunately, been rebound in museum bindings. Both include brief memoranda in the hands of Ord and Ray. The narrative displayed of ownership prior to that of Ord has recently been challenged as a smokescreen to cover theft by Ord: but it would take forensic analysis beyond that of the naked eye to explore further the various signatures pasted scrapbook-wise inside the new covers of the book, having been recovered and removed from the boards of the antiquarian binding it replaced.⁸⁵ In the second half of the twentieth century, at least, the Henry VII book was fairly heavily used, since it filled a gap in the Public Record Office series, whereas for the Henry VIII book there was both the office copy held by the Public Record Office (now the National Archives), and a readily available surrogate in the form of *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*. Sir Thomas Phillips also acquired two Books of Payments as a result of Ord’s sales. Phillips’s preference towards the end of his life would have been to sell his entire manuscript collection to the British Museum: but negotiations failed. After his death, the collection

⁸² *Public Advantages, passim; Select Committee on the Management and Affairs of the Record Commission*, ed. Charles Buller (House of Commons Report, 1836).

⁸³ Frank Milne, ‘Some Exchequer Officials of the XVIIIth century’, *Home Counties Magazine*, vol 3 (1901), pp. 278, 280; *Royal Kalendar and Court Register* (an annual series); for the Exchequer Office in the eighteenth century, R. M. Ball, ‘The King’s Remembrancer’s Office in the eighteenth century’, *The Journal of Legal History*, vol. 11 (1990), pp. 90-113. G. H. Martin, ‘Ord, Craven (bap. 1755, d. 1832)’, *ODNB*, ignores Ord’s Exchequer career.

⁸⁴ BL, Add. MS 21480, 21481.

⁸⁵ Nigel Ramsay, ‘The Tomb of Richard III’, *The Ricardian*, vol. 29 (2019). BL, Add. MS 59900, which includes another paste-down naming Martin, would also be important for comparative purposes and is less physically compromised than BL, Add. MSS 21480 and 21481. Blank folios were removed from all three books before they were bound in hard covers.

was slowly dispersed, and there was no public access to his Chamber Books for more than a century. The two Ord/Phillips Chamber Books passed with the unsold residue of the library to the Robinson Trust by right of purchase and the brothers, although invariably courteous, in general refused permission for access.⁸⁶ What is arguably the most important of the extant books of payment for Henry VII, and the much smaller book of payments and receipts for 1543-1544, were acquired from the Trust by the British Museum only in 1978.⁸⁷ The books retain both their eighteenth century bindings and the library markings of Ord and of Phillips. By the time the British Museum acquired the books, study of the reign of Henry VII, as well as that of the perennially attractive Henry VIII, had become far more active, and the books have been heavily used ever since their acquisition by a public institution.

But for almost a century and a half, Craven Ord had the last laugh. As second secondary in the King's Remembrancer's Office, Ord had the totemic pleasure not only of the custody of the book of Receipts for 1502-1505 which had been declared to the Record Commissioners of 1800, but also of the rediscovered book for 1489-1495 identified by workmen working under the aegis of the Commission.⁸⁸ The British Museum purchased his two notebooks of extracts at the first of the sales.⁸⁹ It is those extracts, further selected and reduced in number and bloated with additional comments (for which Ord was not responsible) that were published by Samuel Bentley, and passed (under the title of Privy Purse accounts) for Henry VII's Chamber Books for more than a century. Even A. F. Pollard, in his three-volume edition of sources for Henry VII's reign, cited *Excerpta Historica* rather than the manuscript originals in the Public Record Office, although he at least drew attention to their existence.⁹⁰

Students of the reign of Henry VIII fared better. The multi-part first volume of the *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII* did not include the Chamber Books.⁹¹ But thereafter both the payments and the back matter were abstracted, and the years 1509-1514 were added retrospectively to volume 2 (1864) of the work. The edition proceeded sufficiently slowly for the editors to be able to include, in due course, and in its correct chronological sequence, a volume of Brian Tuke's accounts after it had been gifted to the Public Record Office by Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan, along with several volumes of William Cavendish's books and papers dating from his tenure of the office of treasurer. The down side of *Letters and Papers* is that a large number of names were deliberately omitted from the calendars, particularly in the lists of monthly payment of wages, although the omissions were flagged. The marginalia of payment and information management crucial to understanding the recognisances and obligations were similarly omitted. Even so, it was a huge achievement. It opened the books up to any use, and did not require the user to contextualise the information back to the manuscript. The historian Henry Harrisse, for example, seized on the books' one reference to Sebastian Cabot, and added the payment made to him for

⁸⁶ The editors of the Tudor volumes of the *History of the Kings Works* were given rare permission.

⁸⁷ BL, Add. MSS 59899, 59900.

⁸⁸ *General Report from the Commissioners on Public Records* (1837), p. 158.

⁸⁹ BL, Add. MSS 7099, 7100.

⁹⁰ Samuel Bentley, ed. 'Extracts from the Privy Purse Expenses of King Henry the Seventh, from December Anno 7, 1491, to March Anno 20, 1505', *Excerpta Historica, or Illustrations of English History* (London, 1833), pp. 85-133; Pollard, *Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources*, vol. 2, pp. 227-32.

⁹¹ Extracts from the books and warrants were, however, utilised in the Introduction to the first edition. This was reprinted in Vol. 1 part 3 of the second: *Letters and Papers*, vol. 1 pt. 3, pp. lvi, lxx.

making a map of Gascony to his canon of Cabot documents. His citation was to *Letters and Papers*, and not to the manuscript.⁹²

Serious study of the Chamber as an institution begins with an article by A. P. Newton, published in 1917. The fiscal survey of Frederick Dietz followed, heavy with calculated figures. A generation later, W. C. Richardson produced a book length and breathy survey of the institutions of government, heavy with quotations and footnotes, and dedicated it to Newton. All three are the foundation blocks of Chamber studies, worth re-reading, perhaps even required re-reading, but to be used with caution.⁹³ They are light years away from the essays produced for the quincentenary of Henry VII's death and published in 2009 as a themed issue of the journal *Historical Research*.⁹⁴ Agnes Conway's survey of Anglo-Irish relations and Henry VII's policy towards the Celtic fringes was an early model in integrating information derived from the Chamber accounts with a wider range of sources, with a surprisingly mature understanding of the Chamber material.

"The Queen's book"⁹⁵

The Winchester Project includes a new transcription of the account of Elizabeth of York's receiver, Richard Decons or Dycons, for the last year of the queen's life.⁹⁶ The original manuscript has been badly damaged by the damp conditions of its storage in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. Repair and rebinding carried out in the early nineteenth century has further obscured the text, although it has secured the preservation of the manuscript. Like the three Chamber Books retrieved from the same historic record repository, it has been paginated in ink, probably at the same time; and the original cover has been removed.⁹⁷

The volume was edited in full transcript by Nicholas Harris Nicolas and published by the antiquarian bookseller William Pickering in 1830.⁹⁸ The edition included a brief biography of the queen, as well as some indication of the contents of the book. The introduction made reference to entries in the king's Chamber Books – but only to entries as published by Samuel Bentley from Craven Ord's

⁹² Henry Harrisse, *John Cabot, the Discoverer of North-America, and Sebastian his Son* (London, 1896), pp. 152, 399.

⁹³ A. P. Newton, 'The King's Chamber under the Early Tudors', *English Historical Review*, vol. 32 (1917), pp. 348-72; Dietz, *English Government Finance*, Richardson, *Tudor Chamber Administration*.

⁹⁴ *Historical Research*, Vol. 82, August 2009, guest edited Mark R. Horowitz.

⁹⁵ TNA, E36/210.

⁹⁶ In June 1503 he was reappointed as receiver-general of the lands previously held by the deceased queen: *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1494-1509*, p. 312.

⁹⁷ All four books were among those repaired and rebound under the direction of John Caley and the Record Commissioners 1819-1832: *General Report from the Commissioners on Public Records* (London, 1837), pp. 12-14. It is assumed that the account described as being 15 Henry VIII is actually the account for Elizabeth of York 17-18 Henry VII. A general list includes also a number of other documents described as Household Books: a description too vague to be useful: *General Report* (1837), pp. 19-24.

⁹⁸ Nicholas Harris Nicolas, ed., *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London, 1830). The publication is not noticed in Colin Lee, 'Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris (1799-1848)', *ODNB*. The published volume included also a partial transcript of the text of Piers Curteys's Great Wardrobe Account for Easter to Michaelmas 1480, Bl, Harleian MS 4780. Nicolas explained in his Introduction his reason for omitting parts of the Wardrobe manuscript, as well as drawing attention to some of the details that he found interesting. The manuscript original was, of course, yet another escapee from official custody. For the bookseller and antiquarian publisher of Nicolas's work, Bernard Warrington, 'Pickering, William (1796-1854)', *ODNB*.

extracts from the Chamber Books.⁹⁹ The discursive index-cum-glossary still has some value to the modern reader, although it needs to be used with care. Nicolas's edition was reprinted in 1972 as a limited edition facsimile.¹⁰⁰ Nicolas included, to the best of his abilities, a transcript of the very badly damaged nine folios at the commencement of the book. These are all of receipts, primarily from the revenues of the queen's lands.¹⁰¹ Working no doubt in poor light, and without the aid of electricity or an ultra-violet lamp, Nicolas (or the transcribing clerk) struggled, and Nicolas banished his very imperfect transcript of the receipts to follow, rather than precede, the payments.¹⁰² Water damage and paper loss means that it has still not proved possible to recover the entire text. The modern transcript, however, runs in proper order, and includes material that Nicolas could not decipher. Hitherto unnoticed, the Winchester edition also includes the auditor's marginalia to the much larger payments section of the book.¹⁰³ These marginalia would have enabled the auditor to draw up a summary account, listing expenditure by type, including almsgiving and mass offerings, casual rewards, piece-rate wages paid to the master and rowers of the queen's barge, money paid, probably as loans, to the queen's own purse, and wardrobe expenses. For the latter, and for jewellery and plate, it is likely that a separate account would have been drawn up.¹⁰⁴ Although this has not survived, Decons's account is rich in detail. It is notable that there is little expenditure on food and drink, other than as almsgiving and as rewards in kind to the king's harbingers and others. The queen's diet and related expenses seem to have been met by the king's cofferer, even when she was apart from the king. Various miscellaneous expenses were subdivided by type.¹⁰⁵ They included items purchased for a queen who had already borne several children, was now of an advanced age for bearing more, and whose final pregnancy seems to have been difficult. It would ultimately result in her death within days of childbirth and, in consequence, the dispersal of her household: some of

⁹⁹ Bentley, ed. *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 85-133. Nicolas seems to have attempted to access the original books. But although he correctly inferred that they were likely to be in the custody of the King's Remembrancer, he reported that the books were 'not to be found': Nicholas Harris Nicholas, *Observations on the State of Historical Literature* (London, 1830), p. 7. Bentley's un-named editor of the Henry VII text too, tried to trace the original books, but concluded that they were likely to be 'in some of the numerous bags that are lying unarranged in Westminster Hall'. It seems a reasonable guess that the editor was Nicolas.

¹⁰⁰ Published Frederick Muller, London, 1972.

¹⁰¹ Among the various revenues listed, 'Aurum Reginae', Queen's Gold, may need further explanation, although in 1502-3 it was a nil return. It was a 10% duty supplementary to and charged on voluntary fines paid to the king for matters of privilege, such as sales of wards, or fines for not receiving the order of knighthood. Both those revenues had, under Henry VII, been taken into the Chamber, and there are thus very few writs surviving for levy of the tax: see TNA, E5/566 and, for a history of the levy, William Prynne, *Aurum Reginae* (London, 1668). After a long discourse on the levy as enjoyed by Elizabeth Woodville, queen of Edward IV, Prynne reported that he could find 'little of moment' for the reign of Henry VII, transcribing only the letters patent for the appointment of the first of Elizabeth of York's receivers, Edmund Chaderton, in 1488: Prynne, *Aurum Reginae*, p. 120.

¹⁰² Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, pp. 107-111. It is not clear whether Nicolas was given direct access to the manuscript book. His trenchant criticism of the practices of the various record offices was published in the same year, 1830: although he allowed that a man known to the Keeper of the Chapter House records might be permitted limited access rather than being obliged to pay a clerk for copies: Nicolas, *Observations*, pp. 8-12, 44-70.

¹⁰³ The gutter and the margins of the book are badly damaged throughout – by water, clumsy repair, and trimming by the binder. The marginalia are often barely visible to the naked eye, and were not initially noticed.

¹⁰⁴ There are several examples for earlier queens in the record class TNA, E101.

¹⁰⁵ The one notation that may need explanation is 'forinseca', 'foreign' expenses seen as tangential to the household or the immediate needs of the queen. They include costs of the maintenance and repair of means of transport, including carts and the queen's barge, and clothes made for the young sons of the queen's sister, Katharine, the wife of William Courtenay.

whom can then be traced, through the Chamber Books, in the household and service of the first two Tudor kings. Amongst other matters, the account includes reference to the refurbishment of Baynards Castle, the Thames-side house formerly in the possession of Cicely, duchess of York, Elizabeth's grandmother, and to carpenter's work to provide archival storage within the queen's council chamber in the palace of Westminster. Notably, the account includes references to Elizabeth's financial support and generosity towards her siblings, the daughters of Edward IV, and there are small reminders that the history of her own lineage and heritage was being kept alive, both in private and in public spaces. Wages and fees both within and outside the household are entered towards the end of the book.¹⁰⁶

There are two points on which the document usefully supplements the Chamber Books. The first concerns the queen's chronic indebtedness. Loans to the queen, and the arrangements made to repay them, are scattered through both Decons's account and through the king's books. Harris Nicolas made reference to several of the latter, although he knew of the entries only at second or third hand through Ord's extracts and their partial publication in Samuel Bentley's *Excerpta Historica*: although there must be a suspicion that Nicolas was himself the editor of this portion of the text.¹⁰⁷ The second point briefly privileges the queen's book as a source when set against the king's Book of Receipts. At the end of the first week of August 1502 Henry VII and his queen commenced a summer progress through Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, returning to the hunting lodge of Langley, in the forest of Wychwood, Oxfordshire, around 16 September.¹⁰⁸ John Heron joined the court, although his lodgings may have been at Woodstock, about eight miles away. For the six weeks of the king's progress, the Chamber Books retrospectively record only the weekly totals from the riding books of Thomas Trollop, Heron's servant, and, separately, the weekly totals of payments made by Heron, probably at Westminster, as well as just five itemised payments, one significant, authorised on 16 or 17 September.¹⁰⁹ Richard Decons, too, was present at the court and may, indeed, have travelled in the queen's entourage. The great Michaelmas audit of the two accounts, the king's and the queen's, commenced almost immediately. They were separate processes involving separate accountants and auditors. Elizabeth is likely to have overseen the audit of her receiver's account, since she signs each page of the payments section of the ledger – to 20 September 1502. She did not sign the books again.¹¹⁰ On 18 September she authorised payment of an apothecary's bill.¹¹¹ In the week ending 23 September the king sent to Burford for a surgeon.¹¹² Elizabeth was well enough to move with the court in early October, and to take part in the Christmas festivities, celebrated that year at Richmond. The queen's premature death, however, may be one reason why some entries towards the back of the book appear to be in a somewhat randomised order. Final audit was necessary, but posthumous, taken in the absence of the lord; and, as the

¹⁰⁶ The household included Elizabeth's bastard half-brother Arthur, the future lord Lisle: TNA, E36/210, p. 92.

¹⁰⁷ The substantial payment of £333 6s 8d to John Heron recorded in the queen's book is a part repayment on one such loan, dated by the king's books to 5 December 1502: TNA, E36/210, p. 75; E101/413/2/3, f. 13v; BL, Add. MS 59899, f. 185r. The volume that goes by Bentley's name was actually the work of several scholars, and was issued initially in parts.

¹⁰⁸ For the king's Itinerary, M. M. Condon, 'Itinerary of Henry VII 1485-1509' (in preparation).

¹⁰⁹ This audit was explored in depth in David Starkey, in his 2018 Winchester presentation, 'King, Court and Chamber'.

¹¹⁰ TNA, E36/210, pp. 29-54. She continued to sign individual bills in order to authorise them for payment.

¹¹¹ TNA, E36/210, p. 54. John Grice was also the king's apothecary. Three days later Grice's servant, who had presumably brought the potions, was rewarded with 16s 'towards his wedding gowne': TNA, E36/210, p. 55

¹¹² TNA, E101/415/3, f. 103r. It would have been a round journey of little more than ten miles.

king's Books and of the books of declared accounts show, the queen's lands passed once more, as was customary, into the control of the king.¹¹³

There is a third point. The evidence is circumstantial, and it seems to have gone unnoticed. Richard Decons recorded, without date, the receipt of £500 from the queen by the hands of Sir Thomas Lovell, on a 'pledge' of plate – that is, precious metal tableware was handed over by way of guarantee of a loan.¹¹⁴ The king's books, in the week following St George's day (23 April) 1502, recorded a loan of £500 to the Queen – and, slipped in among the register of debts, and by an entry recording the loan, there remains a signed memorandum in the queen's hand agreeing the terms of repayment.¹¹⁵ While Lovell was certainly a senior councillor and a knight of the Garter, and could simply have been a trustworthy messenger, was he also, as other evidence might suggest, still officially the treasurer of the Chamber and acting in that capacity?

Harris Nicolas's edition made the text available to scholars at an early date. Yet it has been far less used than the much inferior and third-hand [King's] Chamber Book extracts, derived from Craven Ord's transcripts, published by Samuel Bentley as 'Privy Purse Accounts'. Mary Everett Green, a record scholar of considerable ability, made good use of Harris Nicolas's volume in her study of English princesses; Agnes Strickland, writing on the English queens, cited it but briefly and used it without understanding.¹¹⁶ The edition is a surprising omission from Stanley Chrimes's biography of Henry VII, although he was too good a scholar not to have been aware of it; nor is it mentioned in the Baynards Castle chapter of the *History of the King's Works*.¹¹⁷ The accounts as a whole contain much that would feed the Victorian preoccupation with manners and customs: but for this there were other, perhaps easier to use, or more fashionable, sources, including the wardrobe account printed in the same volume. It was an opportunity lost.¹¹⁸

It is also an opportunity gained. The twenty-first century has seen an explosion of interest in the Tudors, driven in part by the media. That has spilled over into an interest in Tudor women, and is further augmented and shaped by the coming of age of gendered history as a main-stream academic discipline. It has found outlets and expression both in popular literature, and in more substantial works. Studies of Elizabeth of York, often portrayed as a 'grey' and shadowy figure, have multiplied, both as stand-alone books and as chapters in themed works. Purpose built royal residences had a king's side and a queen's side: but they interconnected. The digital editions of the Chamber Books and the "Queen's Book", constrained though they are by the loss or survival of original texts, potentially performs the same tasks for the sources.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ A valor of the lands was drawn up in preparation after the queen's death. The king's books show that on 4 April Decons paid over to John Heron the small balance remaining on his accounts: TNA, E101/413/2/3, f. 26v. Subsequent declared accounts of the 'Revenues of Lands' include the lands of the Queen: TNA, E36/212, 213.

¹¹⁴ TNA, E36/210, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ TNA, E101/415/3, ff. 93r, 249v-250r.

¹¹⁶ Mary Everett Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest* (6 vols, 1849-55, reissued London, 1857), vols. 3-4; Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest* (new edn. in 6 vols), vol. 2 (George Bell, 1909), pp. 82-3 [vol iv and p. 48 in the 1857 edition].

¹¹⁷ S. B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972); H. M. Colvin et al, *History of the King's Works*, vol. IV (London, 1982), pp. 50-2. Remedied for Baynards Castle in Thurley, *Houses of Power*, pp. 55-6, but without detail.

¹¹⁸ David MacGibbon cited the book in his 1938 biography of Elizabeth Woodville, the queen's mother (d. 1492). He also found much of direct interest in the account of Elizabeth Woodville's receiver general, John Forster, for 6-7 Edward IV: TNA, E36/207.

¹¹⁹ Under the constraints of the pandemic year 2020 it has not proved possible to consult individual publications for the use of the Queen's Book. Retha Warnicke, 'Queenship: Politics and Gender in Tudor England' *History Compass*, vol. 4 (2006), pp. 203-27 is a useful general survey covering some of the main

Henry VII and his life at Court – A Synopsis

The Chamber Books, particularly the five extant payment books of Henry VII's reign, give insight into virtually every aspect of the king's life, political and personal. Much of what they contain are regular or cyclical payments, such as the monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual lists of salaries paid out of the chamber; annual payments of particular foods for Lent, Maundy pence, offerings on Saints' and feast days and celebrations attached to those events give a sense of the rhythm of court life. What follows is a thematic survey, rather than an in-depth examination, of court life as reflected in the Chamber Books, with the intention of demonstrating what can be found within the books, and to indicate their potential for further research.

Habitual Piety and the Court Year

Medieval life, for court and country alike, was dictated by the Church calendar. After the gift-giving that marked New Year and the burning of the Yule log celebrations on Twelfth night came the dietary restrictions, Sunday sermons and solemnity of Lent, during which preachers, usually scholars or prominent ecclesiastics, were invited to preach on a Sunday for which they were rewarded 20s.¹²⁰ In the last years of Henry VII's life, and the early years of Henry VIII's reign, John Colet, the humanist dean of St. Paul's, regularly gave the lesson.¹²¹ Palm Sunday marked the start of Easter celebrations, which started in earnest on Maundy Thursday, known as ShireThursday in the Chamber Books, or, in modern parlance, Sheer Thursday. As Lisa Liddy points out in a blog written for this website, Sheer, meaning clean or absolved, is likely an allusion to the purification of the soul through confession and the physical act of cleaning churches, including washing altars, that was commonly undertaken on this day.¹²² In a gesture of humility, on this day the king washed the feet of selected poor men and gave purses of Maundy coins to as many poor men as the king had had years of life. In 1496, for example, Maundy pence of 3s 4d per man were given to 40 'almoos men', to correlate with this being the king's 40th year. The following payment was for 'xl smale purses for [th]at money xx d'.¹²³ Good Friday was marked with further alms giving, and Easter Sunday saw the distribution of rewards or bonuses to the kitchen cooks and others within 'thoffice of the Squillar[e]', presumably for laying on the traditional Easter fare to mark the end of the boredom of Lenten meals, and the porters at the king's gate.¹²⁴

Henry VII had preferred places in which to spend the five major feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Whitsun and All Saints as well as other specific occasions. The king's palace at Sheen, and later Richmond, after Sheen burnt down, was Henry VII's preferred place to spend Easter and Whitsun, though Maundy Thursday was at Westminster for the ceremonial distribution of Maundy

tropes and literature prior to 2006. There have been further contributions since including Arlene Okerlund, *Elizabeth of York* (Basingstoke, 2009). Okerlund compiled an itinerary 1502-3 based on the Queen's Book, noted Thurley, *Houses of Power*, p. 422.

¹²⁰ For instance, TNA, E101/414/16, ff.18v-22r, 58r – 60v; E101/415/3, ff.44r-49v; 85v – 89v; BL. Add. Ms. 59899, ff.14r-19r.

¹²¹ TNA, E36/214, ff. 73v, 123r, 162, 165v; E36/215, ff.114, 175, 238, 303, 305, 367, 511; BL. Add. Ms. 21481, ff.88r, 151r, 152r, 183r; J.B. Trapp, 'Colet, John', *ODNB*

¹²² Lisa Liddy, 'The Maundy Coins of Henry VII and Henry VIII', blog (published April 2017), [The Maundy Coins of Henry VII and Henry VIII – Tudor Chamber Books](#)

¹²³ TNA, E101/414/6, f.25r.

¹²⁴ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.23r, 66r; E101/414/16, ff.23v, 60v-61r; E101/415/3, 19v etc.

purses. Westminster was also where All Saints (1 November) was spent when possible, along with the feast of St. Edward (13 October), when, if the king was not still on his summer progress, he would wear his crown in a procession to a Mass heard by the shrine of the confessor in Westminster.¹²⁵ Christmas and Epiphany were generally spent at Westminster, partly to accommodate the secular feasting and celebrations that accompanied the feasts (see below) until the new palace at Richmond was completed in 1502 where he spent five of his eight last Christmases.¹²⁶

Religious feasts also provided markers for what debts were due when. The law terms, four periods in which the law courts operated, were key here, created to avoid the major ecclesiastical festivals and the periods immediately preceding and succeeding them and avoiding Lent and harvest time.¹²⁷ The Exchequer mostly followed the same timetable, and the Chamber fell in line with the Exchequer. The longest, Michaelmas (or Michaelmes in the Chamber Books), began the day after the feast of St. Michael (29 September, a week later in the legal courts) until around the beginning of advent (the Sunday closest to 1 December). The week after the feast of St. Hilary (20 January) started Hilary term, which ran until the beginning of Lent, which might be as little as two, but rarely more than four, weeks long.¹²⁸ Easter term began a week after Easter Sunday (the law term started a week later) and continued past the feast of the Ascension (the fortieth day after Easter) until a week after Ascensiontide. Lastly, Trinity term was also of variable length, beginning a week and a day after Trinity Sunday, and ending three weeks after the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist (14 July).¹²⁹ The moveable nature of these terms led to the use of the nearest fixed point to either their beginning or their end as days of reckoning of debts payable. Hence the debts and obligations listed in the back of the Chamber Books usually refer to sums due at Michaelmas, for the beginning of Michaelmas term, Martinmes (St. Martin's Day, 11 November) for its end, and so on.

The amount offered by the king at mass was habitually 6s 8d, varying only for the feasts of Christmas and Easter, when it usually doubled.¹³⁰ The king ordinarily attended Sunday mass in the Chapel Royal with the rest of his household, as he did at Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday and forty other feasts of the year.¹³¹ The king's offering would have been made for him at the high altar by one of his gentlemen ushers, whilst the king himself would have sat apart from the congregation in his own holyday closet, which probably contained its own altar and plate.¹³² There is only one sustained

¹²⁵ For instance, TNA, E36/210, f. 82; Thurley, *Houses of Power*, p.70

¹²⁶ BL. Add. Ms. 59899, ff. 7v, 40r, 41v; Thurley, *Houses of Power*, p.71.

¹²⁷ *A Handbook of Dates*, ed. C.R.Cheney and Michael Jones (Cambridge, 1945, revised 2000), pp.98-99.

¹²⁸ It is likely that care was taken to avoid Lent because of the ecclesiastical prohibition on the taking of oaths during this period: *Handbook of Dates*, p.99.

¹²⁹ *Handbook of Dates*, p.99.

¹³⁰ This increased to 13s. 4d. at Christmas and Easter (though not habitually other feast days), e.g. TNA, E101/414/6, ff.26v, 65r; E101/415/3, f.39v; E36/215, f.372. There were odd exceptions to this, such as the 33s 4d offered on 'twelfth day' in 1496 (TNA, E101/414/6, f.15r), but these are rare. The five principal feast days (Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Whitsun and All Saints) would have been occasions where the king and queen wore their crowns and robes of state in the Chapel Royal. Fiona Kisby, 'Courtiers in the Community: the Musicians of the Royal Household Chapel in Early Tudor Westminster', in Thompson, ed. *The Reign of Henry VII*, p.239.

¹³¹ As opposed to daily Mass, which he heard in his Privy Closet: Fiona Kisby, 'Courtiers in the Community', p.238

¹³² Kisby, 'Courtiers in the Community', p.234. An usher would also have made offerings for the king at churches visited on progress, for example see 1498: TNA, E101/414/16, f.24v.

period of absence in this practice when, for a period of 9 weeks from 2 September until 29 October 1508, no offering is made.¹³³ The most likely reason for this is that Sweating sickness had struck the king's household and the king had therefore decided to take self-isolation measures, including hearing mass in his privy closet, a small chapel adjacent to his privy chamber where he usually heard his daily devotions. The sickness had not spared those close to the king – in the summer just passed, Hugh Denys, groom of the stool and the king's closest servant in his Chamber, contracted the disease, as did Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert and vice-chamberlain of the household.¹³⁴ Richard Fox, Lord Privy Seal and bishop of Winchester and one of the king's closest confidants, also contracted the sickness and exiled himself to his palace in Esher to recover.¹³⁵ All visitors to the court were banned, except for medical personnel.

Reflections of the king's piety takes a variety of forms in the king's Chamber Books, from alms and rewards to visiting friars, including those from the continent, or further, such as India, to giving money to religious fraternities and guilds.¹³⁶ Both Henry VII and Henry VIII subscribed to fraternities across the country, which benefitted from both the royal patronage and payment of fees, whilst the king would gain prayers from fellow members. London fraternities particularly benefitted: annual subscriptions were paid to the 'brethered of seint George', Southwark (13s 4d per annum, paid on the saint's day), and that of St. Ursula (10s) from at least 1496.¹³⁷ Corpus Christi at St. Sepulchre Without Newgate (usually 13s 4d per occasion) and that of St Clement Without Temple Barr (6s 8d) received annual payments from 1505 until the end of Henry VII's reign.¹³⁸ The fraternity of the Goldsmiths, a guild favoured by the early Tudor kings, based at St. Dunstan's church received 40s annually from Henry VII, and Henry VIII maintained this payment, at least in the first decade of his reign.¹³⁹ It was not just London fraternities that benefitted, the king subscribed to the fraternity of Christ in Grantham (6s 8d)¹⁴⁰ and made occasional one-off payments, such as 40s he paid to the fraternity of St. Christopher at York in 1502.¹⁴¹ The king also paid for a priest at Walsingham, who was paid 100s per half year, and for tapers to burn before the altar of the Virgin there, at a cost of 46s 3d for half a year.¹⁴²

Burials and Memorials

The king's expenditure on alms, religious and pious causes increased considerably towards the end of his life, when his health was in decline. Particular beneficiaries were the Observant Friars, a

¹³³ TNA, E36/214, ff.143v-150v.

¹³⁴ J. Hughes, 'Charles Somerset, 1st Earl of Worcester', *ODNB*

¹³⁵ *Memorials*, pp.126-8.

¹³⁶ In 1496 along the king gave rewards and alms to a number of friars from the continent (TNA, E101/414/6, ff.14v, 18r, 31v, 41r, 42r, 45v, 51r, 56r. In addition, 2 friars from India received 40s (TNA, E101/414/6, ff.4r.

¹³⁷ TNA, E101/414/6, f.29, 70v, 74r; E101/414/16, f.29r; BL, Add Ms. 59899, f.4r. St George's is in the queen's book also – E36/210, f.32, and also received occasional payments from Henry VIII of the same amount, E36/215, f.512; E36/216, f.132r.

¹³⁸ TNA, E101/415/3, f.23v, 55v; BL, Add MS. 59899, f.92r; TNA, E36/214, ff.43v, 86v, 136r

¹³⁹ TNA, E101/414/6, f.42r; E101/415/3, f.39r; BL, Add Ms. 21481, f.197r 'to the fraternite of saint Dunstance in the west in London upon a warraunt dormaunte at the fest of advincula sancti Petri'. For the king's relationship with the Goldsmiths' Company see S. Harper, 'London and the Crown in the Reign of Henry VII' (unpublished PhD thesis, London, 2015), pp.136-148.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, E101/414/6, 50r; E101/415/3, f.34v. The queen also favoured the fraternity of Christ Church at St. Sepulchre: E36/210, f.33.

¹⁴¹ BL, Add Ms. 59899, f.4v

¹⁴² E.g. BL. Add. Ms. 59899, f.13r.

reformed branch of the Franciscan order, with whom Henry Tudor had had close association whilst in exile in Brittany. In his first weeks as king, Henry VII granted a charter to the Observant Friars for a convent at Greenwich, and the king tended to give alms to Observant friars when on progress.¹⁴³ In December 1501, deliveries of £618 worth of 'Rygate stone' were made to Richmond for a new friary to be built adjacent to the royal palace at Richmond, and Thomas Benkes, the carpenter engaged as overseer of works at the royal palaces, was indentured to oversee the building of the friars new home.¹⁴⁴ In the last years of Henry's life, thousands of masses, at a cost of nearly £200, were purchased of the Observants to be said for the king.¹⁴⁵ This was in addition to £350 spent for some 16,000 masses said at Oxford and Cambridge in 1508-9 and a further 2000 to be said in London the following year at a cost of £50.¹⁴⁶

Among the largest sums of single expenditure in the Chamber Payment Books are those for the king's magnificent chapel at Westminster abbey, where the king was interred next to his wife on 11 May 1509, and his tomb erected after 1512 (displaced from the site originally specified) in accordance with a series of indentures finalised between July and December 1504.¹⁴⁷ Margaret Condon's study regarding the complex arrangements of indentures and provisions of the will detail the machinations surrounding the execution (and subsequent alteration) of the King's plan for his tomb, memorials, obits and foundation of the Savoy almshouses, but a synopsis of the course of events can be gleaned from the Chamber Books alone.

Originally conceived to be at Windsor, near the resting place of his maternal uncle, Henry VI, the location was moved after the monks of Westminster and Chertsey disputed Windsor as Henry VI's preferred resting place and an inquiry, in 1498, found in Westminster's favour.¹⁴⁸ Work continued on the king's tomb at Windsor before it was transported to Westminster, for in 1501-2 Master Estfeld, master of the king's works in Windsor, received a total of £78 3s 2d for 'the kings tounge at Windesour'.¹⁴⁹ In December 1502, £30,000 was set aside for land to be purchased for the endowment of the new chapel, and the foundation stone was laid a month later, on 24 January 1503.¹⁵⁰ The tomb itself moved in the same month, and Master Estfeld received £10 for 'conveying of the King[es] tounge from Windso[ur] to Westm[inster]'.¹⁵¹

Henry VII's will specified that his tomb should occupy a place of honour before the high altar in Westminster, but ended up in the place probably designated for a new shrine to a canonised Henry VI.¹⁵² Work quickly got underway for the new chapel, and large sums were paid to John Islip, the abbot of Westminster, to use on the project, amounting to nearly £1,000 between January and April

¹⁴³ For instance, TNA, E101/414/6, ff.51r, 66r, 70v, 75r, 84r; E101/414/16, ff.4v, 24v, 25v, 44r, 56v; Thurley, *Houses of Power*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, E101/415/3, f.76r, 94v, 101r; BL. Add. Ms. 59899, ff.13v, 35v, 39r. The works came to a close in 1506: TNA, E36/214, f.28r.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, E36/214, ff.74v, 88r, 123r, 164r.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, E36/214, f.123v, 162r,163r.

¹⁴⁷ Margaret Condon, 'God Save the King! Piety, Propaganda and the Perpetual Memorial', *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII*, ed. Tim Tatton Brown and Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge, 2003), pp.59-97.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.60.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, E101/415/3, ff.60r, 74r, 81r, 88r, 93r.

¹⁵⁰ BL. Add. MS. 59899, ff.7v; Condon, 'God Save the King!', pp.59-97; B. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and Its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1977), 198-202, 425-7.

¹⁵¹ BL. Add.Ms.59899, f.11r.

¹⁵² Condon, 'God Save the King' p.60.

1503.¹⁵³ The finalisation of the indentures embodying the terms of the arrangements between the king and Islip did not happen until July 1504.¹⁵⁴ This was swiftly followed by a further release of funds for the chapel, and mid-month payments were made of £5,000 'upon an Indentur made betwixt the kinges grace and the forsaied abbot', with further payments of £579 13s 2d to reimburse Islip for his earlier expenditure on works on the chapel and £300 'in prest for the same Chapell'.¹⁵⁵

Impetus to start work quickly on the chapel might have been added by the death of Henry's queen, Elizabeth of York, in February 1503. Two payments for her burial amounted to nearly £2,900, with additional expenses, such as the mourning garb of the royal household, met by the exchequer.¹⁵⁶ The funeral of young prince Edmund in 1500, by contrast, cost the Chamber considerably less, with a payment of £242 11s 8d made to the abbot and convent of Westminster 'as apperith by a boke of p[ar]selles'.¹⁵⁷ The burial costs of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon's small son in 1511 amounted to a cost of only £35 13s 4d to the Chamber.¹⁵⁸

It is not just family burials that appear within the Chamber Books – funeral costs for traitors were frequently met by the Chamber. Henry VII contributed towards the burials of his Lord Steward, Sir William Stanley, after his execution for treason in 1495, and that of Edward, earl of Warwick, executed in 1499.¹⁵⁹ Henry VIII paid £7 15s 2d towards the burial costs of Edmund de la Pole in 1513.¹⁶⁰

Annual Celebrations

Sidney Anglo observed that the 'source materials for Henry VII's court festivals are disappointingly meagre', particularly when compared to those for his son, which are covered in a series of detailed Revels Accounts and this has led to the 'drab appearance of his reign'.¹⁶¹ The main source of the entertainment and festivals of the reign are the Chamber Books, with detail of the king's personal expenditure on customary celebrations at Christmas and other festivals as well as the more informal pastimes Henry engaged in.

The major religious festivals of Christmas and Epiphany occasioned large scale entertainment, and the Chamber Books gives an insight not only into the expenditure on these events, but also the nature of the spectacles hosted by the king. From at least 1494 until 1500, a 'disguising' or masque was organised as part of the Christmas celebrations by Jacques Haulte (or Jakes Haute, as he is often referred to in the books), for which he received a budget of £25-30 per occasion.¹⁶² Haulte, who is described as 'the king's esquire' in a grant made to him in 1497, appears to have fulfilled a sort of

¹⁵³ BL.Add.Ms.59899, ff.3r, 11r, 18r.

¹⁵⁴ Condon, "God Save the King!", p.62.

¹⁵⁵ BL. Add. Ms.59899, f.62r.

¹⁵⁶ BL. Add. MS.59899, ff.15r, 24r. TNA, LC2/1, ff.59r-79v.

¹⁵⁷ BL. Add. Ms.59899, f.20v. It is to be noted that other expenses for this event were met by the Exchequer, and the total costs were likely to exceed the £650 paid by the Exchequer for the funeral of the princess Elizabeth in 1495. TNA, E404/82, warrants dated 23 and 26 October 1495.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, E36/215, f.105.

¹⁵⁹ Bl. Add. Ms. 7099, f.23; TNA, E101/415/3, f.6r.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, E36/215, f.253.

¹⁶¹ Anglo, 'Court Festivals of Henry VII', pp. 12-45

¹⁶² Haulte probably organised such events before this date, but this is the first for which we have evidence. BL Add. Ms. 7099, ff.21, 32; TNA, E101/414/6, ff.9r, 13r, 16v, 54v, 60r; E101/414/16, ff. 7r, 15r, 47r, 58r; E101/415/3, ff.12r.

'master of ceremonies' role at court, for in addition to arranging 'disguysings' he also orchestrated 'tenesplay' events and the buying of 'tables, chesse, glasses and other necessaries' for the king.¹⁶³ Christmas also occasioned the payment of bonuses to various members of the royal household. The Heralds at Arms received £6 'for their larges', the children of the chapel shared 40s between them whereas the gentlemen of the chapel had £13 6s 8d, the officers of the king's kitchen got 50s, the pages of the chamber 20s, the watch on Christmas night 40s, the same as the henchmen and the porters at the king's gate, whereas the marshalls of the king's hall received £6 13s 4d.¹⁶⁴ The entertainment staff also did well out of the event, with shakbusshes (100s), trumpeters (100s), styleminsterals (£4) and various groups of players benefitting from the king's largesse.¹⁶⁵

As well as the 'disguysings' to celebrate Christmas, New Year and the feast of the Epiphany occasioned their own celebrations and entertainments. New Year saw the traditional exchange of gifts, and the entry for New Year day is characterised in the Chamber payment books by long lists of rewards to servants bearing their masters' gifts for the king.¹⁶⁶ The size of the reward varies according to the sender and, quite probably, the value of the gift. Rewards to the servants of the episcopate are first in the list, followed by those of the magnates. The king's own expenditure on gifts appear annually in the Chamber payment books, but regrettably without much detail as to the recipient or the appearance of the gift. A 'Rose of Rubions crowned w[i]t[h] a diamount', purchased at the beginning of December in 1501 for £26 13s 4d was likely a handsome gift, as may have been the 29oz cup of gold purchased in 1502 for nearly £50.¹⁶⁷ The capital's goldsmiths, such as Nicolas Warley, Thomas Exmew, John Mondy and John Shaa received payments for supplying New Year's gifts.¹⁶⁸

The feast held by the king to celebrate twelfth night in 1494 is described in detail in the Great Chronicle of London. The Chronicle states that 'The kyng kept an honourable howsold at Westmynstyr and upon the twelfth daye was holdyn a sumptuous & grete dyner...' and the narrative describes how the mayor, aldermen and other esteemed Londoners sat at the second table, whereas William Stanley, as Lord Chamberlain, sat alone in the king's place on the high table 'and was servid as the kyng shuld have been'.¹⁶⁹ After dinner, the mayor, 'with hys brethryn', were ushered into the king's chamber, where the king knighted the mayor, Ralph Astry. Afterwards, the mayor and company were encouraged by the king to stay and enjoy 'such dysports as that nyght shuld be

¹⁶³ *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1494-1509*, p.109; For tennis and other activities see BL. Add. Ms. 7099, f3; TNA, E101/414/6, ff.85r, 87r; E101/415/3, ff.33r, 58r. He also oversaw the building works at Woodstock between 1494 and 1500: BL. Add. Ms.7099, 26, 27; TNA, E101/414/6, ff. 27v, 37r, 40r, 45r, 82r, 86r, 90r; E101/414/16, ff.4r, 26v, 32r, 41v, 58r, 66r. Both of these duties appear to have ceased in 1500, and he may have been assigned other duties. After 1502 he occasionally received payment 'upon his bille' (E101/415/3, f.57v, 58r) and appears performing sundry duties in the Queen's payment book in 1502 (E36/210, ff.2, 49). He was listed among the king's esquires at the Queen's funeral (TNA, LC 2/1, f.71r). The only payment to him thereafter was 40s in 1506 for a 'Frenche broke [sic]', and he is not listed as attendant at the king's funeral, suggesting that he had withdrawn from the court, perhaps to take up in situ the stewardship of the lordship of Multon, which had been granted to him in the aforesaid Patent Roll entry upon the death of one James Harynton.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.13r, 13v, 57v, 58r

¹⁶⁵ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.13v, 57v.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. TNA, E101/414/6, ff.57v-58v.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, E101/415/3, f.74r; BL. Add. MS.59899, f.7v.

¹⁶⁸ E.g. TNA, E101/415/3, f.53, 79r; E36/214, f.75r.

¹⁶⁹ *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds. A.D. Thomas and I.H. Thornley (London, 1938), p.251.

shewid'.¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately, this feast took place too early to be reflected in the extant Chamber payment books, but payments to the Lord of Mysrule (40s) visiting fools (6s 8d) and other entertainers suggest that this event was a regular in the court's social calendar, rather than this being an unusual event.¹⁷¹

Informal Entertainments and Personal Leisure Time

The love the early Tudors had for hunting is well documented, and therefore unsurprisingly purchases of hawks, hounds, crossbows, horses and other hunting accoutrements feature heavily in the books. Perhaps indicative of the importance of hawking in his life, the 6-8 falconers employed by the king personally at any one time were each named, served a number of years and occasionally even had their deaths noted in the Chamber Books. Peter Gumpster's long tenure of service as head falconer has already been mentioned, and it is clear from the monthly salary lists in the chamber books that the other falconers served for a number of years.¹⁷²

Every summer Henry VII, when not on progress or after he had been on progress, would visit his hunting lodges in Oxfordshire. Woodstock and Langley were favoured. Henry VII's love of the hunt was well known, and consequently presents of hawks and hounds, particularly greyhounds, were frequent. Henry VII's fondness for hare coursing grew as he got older and his health failed, and rewards to those that found hares for coursing (at a going rate of 3s 4d per hare) increased in his latter years.¹⁷³ His eyesight, as well as his health, inhibited his performance – in July 1507 the king paid 8d compensation for a 'Cocke that the kinges grace kylled at Chesterford with his Crosbowe', one assumes that the cock was not the intended target.¹⁷⁴

Greyhounds were often received by the king as gifts, and would have been used for hunting and, of course, hare coursing. His favourite greyhound was called Launcelot, and is the only pet mentioned by name in the Chamber Books when his keeper received 4s in August 1500.¹⁷⁵ Launcelot may have been the recipient of one of two expensive collars, purchased for 40s in 1498.¹⁷⁶ It is likely that lesser favoured pets were not so lavishly dressed, as a payment for a leash and collars the year after amounted to only 2s 6d.¹⁷⁷

As for indoor activities, both kings enjoyed chess, dice and cards. Henry VII was a keen player of cards, and payments for his playing money or to cover his costs are frequent, though rarely large. It is difficult to get a full picture of his spending on games, as his grooms, who often received his playing money on his behalf, may well have kept a 'slush fund' for such activities that was occasionally topped up.¹⁷⁸ Hence, although there are many payments to cover the king's losses, it is impossible to gauge how successful a gambler he may have been as we lack information about his winnings, which were most likely retained by his closest servants for future use. Generally, his

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ For example, TNA, E101/414/6, ff.15v, 58r; BL. Add. Ms. 59899, f.10r.

¹⁷² For example, in 1498 when Haunse the falconer died, TNA, E101/414/16, f.42r.

¹⁷³ E.g. TNA, E101/414/16, ff.39v, 42r; E101/415/3, ff.31r, 32r, 33r; E36/214, ff. 52r, 53r, 103v.

¹⁷⁴ TNA, E36/214, f.88v

¹⁷⁵ TNA, E101/415/3, f.26v.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, E101/414/16, f.33r.

¹⁷⁷ TNA, E101/414/16, f.59r.

¹⁷⁸ E.g. TNA, E101/414/6, ff.15v, 19r, 68v, 90r; E101/414/16, 62r; E36/214, ff.44v, 47v, 48v, 151r.

wagers were small, with the largest single expenditure at cards - £37 – occurring in 1496.¹⁷⁹ An uncharacteristic wager with ‘master Lovell’, presumably Thomas Lovell as opposed to his gardener of the same name, which cost the king £10, points potentially to a sense of good sportsmanship.¹⁸⁰ Losses at chess and dice were similarly recorded, though not with the same frequency as cards.¹⁸¹

Henry VII also had a fondness for tennis, both as a player and a spectator. Payments for tennis balls and arrangements for ‘tenesplay’ are common particularly in the 1490s.¹⁸² A loss in 1494 to Sir Robert Curson in 1494 cost the king 27s; the opponent to whom he lost to in 1499 was perhaps of a lesser quality, as he received only 8s.¹⁸³ New opponents often received generous rewards, such as the 40s given to ‘a spanyard the tenes pleyer’ in 1494, slightly less generous than the £4 given to the ‘new pleyer at tenes’ in 1496. That these men were not named or previously known to the king suggests he was not fussy about the social standing of his opponent, only the quality of his game. The last payment for tennis appears in 1499, suggesting that perhaps the king no longer remained fit enough to play after this time.

Among the king’s victorious opponents in such activities was his son, the Duke of York, to whom he lost 6s 8d in 1498.¹⁸⁴ The young prince certainly acquired a taste for such play, and his expenses far outstripped those of his father. During the first three months of 1519, for example, he received a total of £270 in playing money which, given that by the time the privy purse, met most of the king’s sundry personal expenses, is unlikely to represent the full extent of his expenditure on game playing in this period.¹⁸⁵ The privy purse was kept by the king’s closest body servant, the Groom of the Stool, and its common usage from the earliest years of Henry VIII’s reign means that we lack many of the small personal details about his expenditure that enrich our knowledge of his father’s personal preferences and habits.

Extra Familial relationships

The chamber books shed some light on the familial relationships of Henry VII, and these have been explored in a number of publications.¹⁸⁶ The friendships Henry VIII enjoyed early in his reign have also been the subject of recent study.¹⁸⁷ Less frequently examined are the likely friendships enjoyed by Henry VII, and other informal relationships, with the exception perhaps of his relationships with those who shared his exile.¹⁸⁸

Henry VII stood as Godparent to at least two boys, both named Henry, and he appears to have diligently discharged his duties therein. From the start of the payment books regular payments are made to one Agnes Adams of Isleworth, frequently referred to as ‘the wiffe of Thistlewourth’ for

¹⁷⁹ TNA, E101/414/6, f.31v.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, E101/415/3, f.85v.

¹⁸¹ BL. Add. Ms. 7099, f.24; TNA, E101/414/6, f.68v; E101/415/3, f.79v.

¹⁸² BL. Add. Ms. 7099, f.23; TNA, E101/414/6, ff.81r, 85r, 87r; E101/414/16, 14r.

¹⁸³ BL. Add. Ms. 7099, f.19; TNA, E101/414/16, f.67r.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, E101/414/16, f.27r.

¹⁸⁵ TNA, E36/216, ff.31v, 34r, 35v.; Starkey, ‘Intimacy and innovation’, pp.94-5.

¹⁸⁶ Most recently, in Penn, *Winter King* and Sean Cunningham, *Prince Arthur* (Stroud, 2016).

¹⁸⁷ Starkey, *Henry: Virtuous Prince*; G.W. Bernard, ‘The Rise of Sir William Compton, Early Tudor Courtier’, *English Historical Review*, 96 (1981), 754-77; Gunn, *Charles Brandon*.

¹⁸⁸ Ralph Griffiths and Roger Thomas, *The Making of the Tudor Dynasty* (Gloucester, 1985).

Henry, son of Lady Jane Boughan.¹⁸⁹ That the boy is usually referred to as 'Jane Boughan's childe' or 'Lady Jane's childe' suggests that perhaps the father is either dead or wished not to be identified. The identity of the Lady Jane herself is a mystery, for at this point the Bohun noble family are extinct, and the surname 'Bougham' is connected to the Buchan earls of Scotland, for which a 'Jane' cannot be attributed to this period. The boy sadly did not survive his childhood, for the last entry for him, in July 1501, is to 'Agnes Adames for keeping & burying of Henry Boughan the kings godson xxvjs viijd'.¹⁹⁰

Henry Pynago, the king's other godson identifiable in the Chamber Books, fared rather better. First identifiable in the Chamber Books from 1498, he received regular rewards without mention of a parent or guardian.¹⁹¹ He appears as one of the Sewers of the Chamber at Henry VII's funeral and remains in this position into the reign of Henry VIII.¹⁹² Unfortunately, like Boughan, his provenance is not readily apparent.

Another example of how the Chamber Books might be employed to shed light on his friendships, the regularity of payments to servants of Sir Walter Herbert for bringing of gifts to the king is suggestive of a long-standing relationship maintained until the end of their lives. Every year, in August, Sir Walter Herbert sent a gift of a hawk to the king.¹⁹³ It is possible this was to commemorate the king's Bosworth battlefield victory, where Walter may have had fought, or simply because it was hunting season and the King's love of hawking was well known.¹⁹⁴ Herbert was not alone in gifting the king hawks, of course, but he does appear to be the most consistent in his gifts.¹⁹⁵

Walter Herbert was the second son of Sir William Herbert (later earl of Pembroke), who had been awarded the custody and wardship of the young Henry, then earl of Richmond, in 1461.¹⁹⁶ Henry grew up at Herbert's castle of Raglan, and formed a close attachment to Pembroke's wife, Anne Devereux, as evidenced by Henry sending for her almost as soon as he reached London after his Bosworth victory.¹⁹⁷ Anne and William had 10 children together, and the two eldest boys, William and Walter, were of an age with Henry and the boys would have had lessons together in subjects such as literacy, Latin and numeracy, and they would have trained together in the tiltyard.¹⁹⁸ If not

¹⁸⁹ The payments average 66s 8d per year and are paid once a term: TNA, E101/414/6, ff.15v, 36r, 64v; E101/414/16, ff.27r, 59v; E101/415/3, f.25v.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, E101/415/3, f.60r.

¹⁹¹ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.87r; E101/414/16, ff.17r; E101/415/3, ff.7r, 13r, 72r; BL. Add. Ms. 59899, 7v, 41v, 53r, 95r; TNA, E36/214, ff. 13r, 62r, 146v. It is probable that it is he, not Henry Bougham, who is the godson who receives 20s and 40s in 1493 and 1497 respectively – BL. Add. Ms.7099, f.9; TNA, E101/414/6, 75r.

¹⁹² TNA, LC2/1, f.127v; He was awarded an annuity of 20 marks p.a. in November 1510: 'Henry VIII: November 1510', in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 1, 1509-1514*, ed. J S Brewer (London, 1920), no. 632 (41).

¹⁹³ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.43r, 90v; E101/414/16, ff.22v; E101/415/3, ff.26r, 86r; BL. Add. Ms.59899, ff.30r, 32v, 62v; E36/214, f.42r. Two years in which Herbert did not send his customary gift were 1498, when the king was on progress in August, and 1502, when the king visited Herbert on his summer progress.

¹⁹⁴ There is no certain evidence of Herbert's involvement at Bosworth, though Virgil stated that Herbert was an influencing factor in Henry's decision to land in Wales in 1485, 'it was thought to stand with their profit if by affinity they could draw into surety of that Walter Herbert', Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. Henry Ellis, Camden Soc., 1st ser., xxix (London, 1844) p.196.

¹⁹⁵ It is to be noted that Herbert also sent the king New Year gifts, usually something Welsh such as Methclen, BL. Add. Ms. 59899, f.45r.

¹⁹⁶ Cunningham, *Henry VII*, p.11.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, E404/79.

¹⁹⁸ Griffiths and Thomas, *Making of the Tudor Dynasty*, 59.

close friends, certainly they were close acquaintances for the eight years that Henry lived at Raglan, and Walter's regular gifts suggest the former was true.

In the summer of 1502, Henry VII and his queen, Elizabeth of York, went on progress visiting, as was usual for the time of year, the king's favourite hunting lodges of Langley and Woodstock in Oxfordshire as well as some of the queen's dower lands in Gloucestershire and areas of South Wales known to Henry in his childhood.¹⁹⁹ The trip was made only a few months after the death of the couple's eldest son, Arthur, and whilst the queen was in the mid-term of a pregnancy that would eventually lead to her own death the following February.

It may be fanciful to imagine that after the death of his eldest son, Henry sought solace in revisiting his childhood home of Raglan, where they were hosted by Hebert, and other familiar places such as Chepstow and Monmouth, though it might be noted that the progress did not encompass travelling as far north as Worcester to visit their son's burial site.²⁰⁰

The Chamber Staff

The other regular variation to the usual payment format of week by week expenditure is to be found in the lists of monthly, quarterly and half year payments of wages made out of the Chamber. These become longer and more orderly as the reign progresses, and provide a valuable insight into the composition of the body of servants closest to the king. In the first of the five extant payment books, the list of around 10 individual entries of people receiving their monthly wage is headed by Piers Crossbow maker and Crochet the armourer.²⁰¹ The trumpeters follow (usually 8 of them), then the Shakbusshes (2-6), occasionally followed by the 'Stringmynstrelx' (3-4) and, usually individually named, the falconers (between 6-8 of them). By the end of the reign the list had grown to encompass not only the musicians, falconers and armourers (Piers remained in post until the end of the reign), but also the Chamber's growing administrative staff, headed by John Heron as Treasurer of the Chamber, and certain of the king's personal servants, such as his fool.²⁰² Wage inflation during Henry VII's reign was selective. The monthly salary of the trumpeters, shakbusshes, Piers the crosbowmaker (13s 4d per month) and Crochet the armourer (16s 8d per month) remain constant throughout the reign.²⁰³ The value placed on the expertise of the Shakbusshes and trumpeters was reflected in the £2 per month salary they received after completing a year-long probation period, during which they received half wages.²⁰⁴ Contrast this amount to the 66s 8d per quarter (just over £3, compared to the £6 per quarter received by the aforesaid musicians) paid to Pero the French cook, who joined the king's household from that of Philip, archduke of Burgundy and claimant of the Castilian throne, in 1506.²⁰⁵ Peter Gumpster, whose name heads the list of 6-8 falconers named in the monthly salary lists, is paid 60s per month between 1495 and July 1505, after which his wages drop

¹⁹⁹ TNA, E36/210, ff.46-55; E404/84.

²⁰⁰ TNA, E36/210, ff.46-55; G. Kipling, 'The Receyt of the Lady Katheryne', *Early English Text Society*, no.296 (Oxford, 1990), 81.

²⁰¹ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.29v, 33r, 36v

²⁰² TNA, E36/214, f.25v.

²⁰³ E.g. TNA, E101/414/6, f.12r & E36/215, p.39.

²⁰⁴ The career of John Blanke, 'the blacke trumpet', is instructive here. He served his probation in 1507 and graduated onto full pay in 1508: TNA, E36/214, ff.109r, 113r, 118r, 120v, 124r, 129v, 131r, 135r, 139v, 142r, 146v, 149v

²⁰⁵ E.g. TNA, E36/214, ff. 30r, 42r, 58v, 85r.

to 40s – whether his duties had correspondingly changed is unknown, though the reduction corresponds with the recruitment of a new falconer, Michell Percy, who received 20s per month.²⁰⁶

Of note was the multi-cultural nature of the king's personal staff. Though the majority of Henry VII's closest servants in the Privy Chamber were derived from the families of minor gentry, there are named within the payment books a profusion of Bretons, French and Welsh household servants and courtiers. This perhaps might have been expected initially, given the composition of Henry's supporters at Bosworth and the fourteen years he spent in Breton and French exile prior to the battle, but the numbers remained or were renewed throughout the reign. To illustrate the point, two of the highest paid, and probably most among the most intimate body servants of the king, are elusively mysterious. Piers Champion and Piers Barbour may have been Breton in origin, and may have come to England with the king in 1485. Both received the same salary of 66s 8d per quarter from the Chamber in the 1490s, and both were trusted to receive money intended for the king's hands in the first receipt book (1488-1490).²⁰⁷ Champion had ceased to receive a salary from the Chamber by the time the first payment books starts in October 1495, but he remained a presence at the court, occasionally receiving rewards, sending the king greyhounds, receiving ambassadors and making (minor) payments on the king's behalf.²⁰⁸

Piers Barbour, Groom of the Privy Chamber, received an annual salary from the chamber of 20 marks per annum, which increased to £15.6.8 by 1495; the same salary as John Heron initially drew even after he took over the position of Treasurer of the Chamber from Thomas Lovell in 1492.²⁰⁹ His salary was his main income, as there appears to be no grants of stewardships, wardships, land or other of the usual boons handed to him in the patent rolls, possibly because he was foreign in origin and therefore barred from acquiring lands in England or Wales without a grant of denization. David Starkey theorised his surname reflected his function, and therefore he was a professional body servant and paid as such.²¹⁰ His role as a barber is less likely, given that from the start of the payment books, a 'king's barbour', named Harry, is paid for his services and in May 1499 another Breton, Massey Villiard, took over as the 'king's barber'.²¹¹ At Henry VII's funeral, Piers Barbour was listed first among the grooms of the chamber, so perhaps Barbour was indeed a 'professional body servant', but undertook the role of valet rather than that of barber.²¹²

The aforementioned Massy Villiard, who may also have been a Breton, did not receive a salary during Henry VII's reign, but rather was paid four shillings a week. This was formalised into a higher income of 66s 8d per quarter in the first year of Henry VIII's reign.²¹³ Within ten years he was sergeant of the Ewery, and was assessed for the subsidy of 1527 as able to pay £56 10s 6d.²¹⁴ His

²⁰⁶ TNA, E101/414/6, f.12r; BL. Add. Ms. 59899, ff. 65v,88v, 91v.

²⁰⁷ TNA, E101/413/2/1, f.17v; E101/413/2/2, ff. 6r, 6v, 8r, 9v, 10v, 15v, 63v 102v.

²⁰⁸ TNA, E101/414/6, ff.28r, 36v, 43r, 63r; E101/415/3, f.35v; BL., Add. Ms. 59899, ff.84v, 86v; Add. Ms. 21480, f. 14r; TNA, E36/214, ff. 46v, 97r, 102v, 115v, 119v; E36/215, f. 57; BL, Add. Ms. 21481, ff.29r, 59r; TNA, E36/215, f.117; E36/216, ff.74r, 119r.

²⁰⁹ TNA, E101/414/6, f.12r.

²¹⁰ Starkey, 'The King's Privy Chamber', 50.

²¹¹ TNA, E101/414/6, ff. 9r, 16r, 28r, 37r, 45v, 53r, 58r, 74v; E101/414/16, ffs. 20r, 23r, 43r, 54r, 59v, 64r, 65v.

²¹² *L&P*, I, no. 20, f.121.

²¹³ TNA, E101/414/16, f.65v; E36/215, f.26.

²¹⁴ He ended up paying £50: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 4, 1524-1530*, ed. J S Brewer (London, 1875), nos. 136, 2972. He was dismissed from his position in the Ewery not long afterwards. (no. 2060).

association with the court continued and he still received wages from the Chamber in December 1545.²¹⁵

Other servants receive wages in the Chamber Books and are equally impossible to trace with any degree of confidence. Some, like Petit John Pregeant, who received a total of £6 13s 4d in rewards in the first eight months in the first of the payment books, was often referred to as ‘the Brutan’, thus his origins in Brittany are evident.²¹⁶ Similarly, Wulf the Dane and the ‘Long Flemming’, who both receive wages in the Chamber, had their origins spelled out in their names, though not much can be discerned about how they entered service within the household or their function there.²¹⁷ The origins of Deigo the Spanish fool, for example, are also readily apparent. Guiliam and Andolf, the ‘luters’, quite probably also came from the continent. Of Henry VII’s falconers, Peter Gumpter, Haunse and Fredrik, all individually named each month in the Chamber Books, were possibly of Low Country or Germanic origin, and another, Frauncois, possibly French or Breton.²¹⁸ The profusion of foreign entertainers and household servants might be taken as indicative of Henry VII’s continental tastes and cultural preferences.

Also of note were the number of Welsh men who served in Henry VII’s chamber, and in remembrance of his Welsh roots, each St. David’s day in the last 6 years of his reign they received a small bonus.²¹⁹ A retained fondness for his homeland is also reflected in payments made in his later years to servants of Rhys ap Thomas for bringing him Methclen, a type of Welsh mead, and Llanthony cheese was regularly bought by the king or sent by the prior of the religious house that made it.²²⁰

Colophon

Henry Tudor made an extraordinary journey from his birth in Pembroke Castle as the posthumous son of a fairly obscure earl and an heiress of a disgraced duke with a modicum of royal blood to his death fifty-two years later in Richmond Palace, more than twenty-three of which he was king of England. The Chamber Books provide unique insight into that journey and that of his son; of the

²¹⁵ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 20 Part 2, August-December 1545*, ed. James Gairdner and R H Brodie (London, 1907), no. 1045, f.19.

²¹⁶ Not to be confused with the ‘Petit John’, also a Breton, who was executed 2 Feb 1495 for being part of the household plot which saw Sir William Stanley beheaded: *Great Chronicle of London*, ed. Thomas and Thornley, pp.256-7. Petit John Pregeant received a total of £6 13s 2d between December 1495 and July 1496, and payments to him tend to appear within lists of household men receiving rewards. TNA, E101/414/6, ff.13r, 23v, 31v, 38v.

²¹⁷ Wulf may have been a nickname, as there is no ‘Wulf’ listed among the king’s household at the royal funerals at the end of the 1490s and early 1500s. He received a quarterly salary of 100s from January 1495 - August 1496 (though his first payment was for the entire year of 1495), more than either Barbour or Heron, who received 66s 8d each. It is possible that he was only a long term visitor to the court, as his employment ended around the same time that an embassy arrived from Denmark, and he may have returned to his native country with the ambassadors. He may have been the same Wulff that received a payment for his services as a physician in February 1499 (TNA, E101/414/16, f.56v), which might go some way towards explaining the high salary. TNA, E101/414/6, ff. 14v, 24r, 36r, 44v. Regrettably, the Long Flemming is never named, though he receives a quarterly wage of 10s from October 1501 until March 1505. TNA, E101/415/3, ff. 70r, 79v, 82v, 89v, 99r; BL, Add. Ms. 59899, ff. 8r, 16v, 30r, 34r, 27r, 42r, 51r, 59r, 65v, 72r, 82v.

²¹⁸ For example, TNA, E101/414/6, ff. 33r, 36r, 57v.

²¹⁹ TNA, E101/415/3, f.86r; BL, Add. Ms. 59899, ff.14v, 80r. In 1505-9 an unspecified number of ‘walshemen’ received 40s on 1 March (BL, Add. Ms. 59899, f.80v; TNA, E36/214, ff.69r, 120v, 164r).

²²⁰ TNA, E101/414/6, f.83r; E101/414/16, f.29r; E101/415/3, f.55v; BL, Add. Ms. 59899, ff.80v, 99r.

personality and interests of both Henries, the life of their court, and, of course, their statecraft, revenue and diplomacy. They are also objects of considerable interest in their own right. When fully understood and placed within the context in which they were created, they shed unparalleled light on the immense hard work of a few men in close physical proximity to the king and the processes at the heart of a very personal rule.

It was rightly noted that:

‘these accounts [Privy Purse accounts Henry VIII] are extremely curious for manners and, with those of Henry VII, preserved in the Exchequer at Westminster and a few others still remaining, would form an interesting addition to the Expenses of Edw. I²²¹ already published by the Society of Antiquaries’ (*A Catalogue of the Lansdowne Manuscripts in the British Museum* (Record Commission, 1819), p. 166).

It has only taken two hundred years.

²²¹ *Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobiae 1299-1300*, ed. J. Topham et al. (London, 1787).