

POLITICS AND A POLITICIAN IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND:

RICHARD NEVILLE, EARL OF WARWICK;

KING MAKER OR KING BREAKER; HERO OR VILLAIN

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“A political family gains allies – retainers, supporters, hangers – on, admirers, associates, in-house Machiavellis. The bigger the government, the more ways allies can be awarded, which binds them more closely. Your destiny is theirs. Members of the court recruit other members. Money lines spread person to person, . . . mover to mover. The most important part is the money lines. Power is expensive. The second most important part is the word “winner.”¹

Introduction.

Just after sunrise on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1471, a single knight in full armor, apparently knowing his cause was lost, rode hard through the early morning mist from the Barnet Battlefield, just north of London. As he passed into the dense wood south of that battlefield, he was identified by Yorkist knights waiting there as Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, leader of the Lancastrian forces that morning in battle. They promptly cut him down from his horse, stripped him of his armor and killed him on the spot. Having received notice of this event, King Edward IV of the House of York, one of two then living Kings of England, ordered the bodies of both Warwick and his brother, John Neville, Marques of Montagu, also slain at Barnet that day, to be taken to London. A day later, the partially draped bodies of these Neville brothers were laid out in a single coffin in St Paul’s Cathedral for three days so that all could see that the Great Earl was truly dead.²

Who was Richard Neville, Earl Warwick? What decisions and events had brought him to this ignominious end? Why was it considered necessary by the ruling King of England to put the corpse of this man on public display for three days? Was he a King Maker or a King Breaker? Was he a hero or a Villain? This paper will endeavor to answer these questions and will attempt to examine the possible motives of the most powerful magnate in

¹ The Wall Street Journal, October 6-7, 2007, p. W7, “Declarations” by Peggy Noonan, “The Trance.”

² Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 73; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 310; Oman, p. 233; but see Kendall, p. 367.

England in the mid 15th Century, which caused him to change his allegiance to then ruling dynasties of England twice during a period of almost 17 years.

15th Century England: A Snapshot

In order to examine and understand Richard Neville, Earl Warwick, especially to understand his motives as they existed in the 15th Century, we must first travel back through the mist of time some 550 years, and get a sense of what it was like to live in England in 1450.

The population of England was down dramatically from the 14th Century when, as of 1300, the population was estimated to be about 5 million people. In 1450, due in large part to the Black Death in 1348 and several outbreaks of the disease since then, the population was down to about 2.5 million with 90% of those individuals making their living from the land. London was the largest city in the country with about 60,000 souls, while York was next largest city with a population of about 15,000.³ The life expectancy of the average male was 50 years, contrasted by the life expectancy of women being 30 years.⁴ Society was already highly stratified, but in relatively small numbers. There were about 15 earls, with only 5 Dukes and the King as their social superiors.⁵ The Gentry class made up the next small, but growing echelon of society, which consisted of knights, squires, landed locals and some merchants. The commons were the main stay of the country, most of whom at this time were involved in the raising of sheep for wool together with some cattle.⁶ Society as whole was quite religious, being predominantly Catholic, having, understandably after the Plague years, a preoccupation with death and the life after.⁷ There was, however, a growing concern about

³ Weir, p. 2; Storey, p. 7.

⁴ Weir, p. 5.

⁵ Storey, p. 22.

⁶ Carpenter, pp. 35-36.

⁷ Weir, p. 3.

the secular roles being played by the clergy and their apparent interest in personal wealth. While these seeds of discontent were sown in the 15th Century, Luther and the Reformation, both on the Continent and in England, were still nearly 100 years off.

English had become the language of the King's Court and of the law Courts replacing Latin and French. Literacy was on the rise, with 40% of Londoners able to read Latin in 1470, based upon which we might expect that an even higher percentage would be able to read English. Books began to be printed in England by Caxton in 1470 and many educational institutions were founded in this period, most notably King's College at Cambridge and its affiliated school for younger boys, Eton College in Windsor, which were both founded by Henry VI, one of the Kings unmade and then remade by Richard Neville.

Economically at home real wages and the state of the common man were improving. This was particularly true for tenant farmers and artisans, who, due to the dramatic reduction in the agricultural work force caused by the Plague, found themselves in real demand with the leverage to make a better living than previously known by this class.⁸ Land was used primarily for wool production, and less for crops. The weaving industry was growing and a brisk trade existed with the Continent for both wool and cloth. The humiliating loss of territory in France during the middle of the 15th Century certainly impacted England's access to these foreign markets, but the continued control of Calais allowed access to major trade centers in the Netherlands. England's navy was in its infancy as a tool of foreign relations, until expanded and utilized to great advantage by Warwick. England was not yet involved in exploration, but Columbus was alive and well in Genoa. However, he did not get underway until 1492, after the Tudors had ended the House of York in 1485.

⁸ Weir, p. 13; Carpenter, p. 53.

Politics and Kingship in the 15th Century traveled on difficult and troubled roads. The Century began with the deposition of a narcissistic and weak king, Richard II, son of Edward, the Black Prince and grandson to the heroic Edward III. He was deposed by another grandson of Edward III, Henry Bolingbroke, son of Edward's third son, John of Gaunt. Henry took the throne based upon his alleged descent from Henry III, which was pure fabrication. The fact was that Richard II needed to be set aside and Henry Bolingbroke, soon to be Henry IV, had the motive (e.g., forfeiture of his estates and permanent exile by the King) and the forces to take the throne. Henry, founder of the House of Lancaster, was an ambitious King in the warrior king tradition. He was followed in 1413 by another brilliant example of the warrior king in the person of his oldest son, Henry V. Henry V successfully carried on the 100 Years War through the second decade of the 15th Century, bringing under English control most of Southern France and Normandy and concluding the War temporarily with the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. Under this Treaty, Henry V was to succeed Charles as King of France upon Charles' death, thus becoming King of England and King of France.

Henry V and his father epitomized the medieval concept of Kingship. They ruled through Parliament, living within their means except where national honor or security was threatened. These early Lancastrians kings were accessible to their magnates. They were expected to, and did, consult, and act in concert, with the magnates of the realm. The kings and their nobles agreed that decisions affecting all should be deliberated by all, and they were.⁹ They won, maintained and enlarged the Kingdom as heroes and warrior kings on the battlefield. As of 1422, the House of Lancaster, though established through a violent deposition, had reestablished respect and honor for an anointed king and more importantly, the absolute trust of the commons in the king and kingship.

⁹ Carpenter, pp. 36-41.

Then in 1422, the “wheels came of the cart.” Henry V died prematurely and his son became Henry VI at 9 months of age. While England and the concept of “Kingship” had prepared itself to deal with an “over-mighty” king, the realm and its nobles had never had to cope with an “under-mighty” king who was too weak in spirit and mind to rule anyone except perhaps himself. As in the past, during the minority of a king, England was managed by a Council of magnates and clergy, who acted in the name of the king and through Parliament.¹⁰ The problem became more of an issue when, after Henry asserted his right to reign as King in 1437, it became apparent that the mental abilities and forceful determination of a King were not present.¹¹ Later, in August of 1453, at age 21, Henry lapsed into a catatonic state for nearly 17 months, during which time he could not communicate or take care of himself.

In this environment, the wealthy landholding magnates and powerful Crown advisors began to form factions or spheres of influence, complete with badges of livery. The relationships within these factions often became formalized by written contracts pursuant to which armed service and loyalty were exchanged for an annual fee and the promise of protection from other factions or overlords.¹² These factions often had differences with each other, which in normal times would have been mediated by the King or resolved conclusively in the law Courts. Since there was effectively no king in the 1440’s and early 1450’s to maintain order within society and to enforce the laws, these factional disputes were often resolved by force of arms, resulting in what amounted to anarchy and a total disregard for the law; in short, civil war. In addition to the disruption caused by this internal fighting between these great families or factions, the common man was tired of being taxed, tired of being at

¹⁰ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 26.

¹¹ Carpenter, p. 51.

¹² Storey, p. 10-17.

war, and tired of the injustice that seemed to permeate the land.¹³ The gentry and the commons of England expected great men to do great or necessary things as appropriate and were willing to allow these great men significant latitude to remedy the problems of the realm by whatever means were necessary.

The Wars of the Roses.

The 15th Century period of greatest upheaval and activity with which we will be concerned begins in 1450 and continues, for our purposes, until 1471, concluding historically in 1485. This period of discord, civil war and dynastic feuding has generally been described, initially by Shakespeare and later by historians, as “The Wars of The Roses.” Writing 100 years after the fact, Shakespeare wanted his audience to believe that this was primarily a jealous fight between two powerful English families, one flying as its symbolic badge a Red Rose (the House of Lancaster) and one wearing as part of its coat of arms a White Rose (the House of York). In fact, no such livery or badges depicting such flowers existed or were ever worn by either of these factions in the 15th Century.¹⁴

These Wars did begin as a feud between Richard, Duke of York, Neville’s uncle, and several supporters of Henry VI, the then current monarch of the Lancastrian dynasty. After 1460, the conflict became much more a question of dynastic supremacy, civil war and open rebellion based fundamentally upon York’s claim to the throne which was arguably superior to that of the Lancastrians. However, the players, with the exception of young Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, generally remained aligned with either the House of York or the House of Lancaster. As the title describes, there was more than one “War.” In fact, there were arguably three periods of conflict, only the first two of which will we be concerned with in

¹³ Carpenter, p. 113.

¹⁴ Ross, *The Wars of The Roses*, pp. 11-15.

our discussions here since Richard Neville was killed at the close of the second period in 1471.

1450 – 1459: York/ Neville – Somerset conflict, with the Lancastrians remaining in control of the King at the end of the period;

1460 – 1471: Henry VI and the Lancastrians deposed by Edward, Earl of March of House of York; First reign of Edward IV and the House of York; Deposition of Edward IV; Readeption of Henry VI; Readeption of Edward IV.

1483-1487: Death of Edward IV; Accession of Richard III and his deposition by Henry Tudor; the coronation as Henry VII and confirmation of the Tudor dynasty.

While there is research suggesting that these Wars were not terribly disruptive or physically damaging to the Country, the Commons or the Gentry,¹⁵ at the top of the social hierarchy, the story is much more dramatic. Between 1460 and 1485, the Crown of England changed hands six (6) times among five Kings, with the life and reign of three of them ending violently.¹⁶ It is during these Wars in the third quarter of the 15th Century that Richard Neville, only recently named Earl of Warwick, took center stage and became the dominant figure in the politics of late Medieval England. Before proceeding further, let us briefly look at Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick and his background.

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick – A Resume.¹⁷

Richard Neville was born November 22, 1428. The oldest son of thirteen children parented by Richard Neville, Fifth Earl of Salisbury and his wife, Alice Montagu. His paternal great great grandfather was Edward III of England and more distantly his mother's ancestors included Edward I, King of England. His great uncle was Henry IV, his first cousin

¹⁵ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 163.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 151.

¹⁷ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 7-30; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 11-27.

once removed was Henry V, while his second cousin was the reigning King, Henry VI, who was age 7 at the time of Neville's birth. As mentioned, his uncle by marriage, was Richard, Duke of York, leader of the House of York and his one day adversary, King Edward VI, was his first cousin. In short, at a time when royalty and blood relations with the Crown were preeminently important to one's future career, Richard Neville was born into the middle of the Lancastrian royal elite related in one way or another to almost everyone who was of noble birth. As we shall see, he clearly was a rising star to be followed and potentially reckoned with. From his birth, he was, therefore marked for high position in government and was expected to do great things for England and its people. Events influenced by Richard Neville and in which he participated, as well as the decisions made by him, certainly fulfilled this prophecy, but with results for him and England, as always, that no one could have ever foreseen.

Almost nothing is known of Richard Neville for nearly the first twenty years of his life. It is assumed that he was brought up in the manner prescribed for boys of his class and rank; remaining at home in the care of his mother until age 7; from 7 to 14 educated and trained in the house of a lord of similar rank, receiving basic tutoring in language, reading, writing and mathematics, together with his initial training in the marital arts and skills of a warrior knight. The only thing that is recorded in this early life that we know for certain was that he was fortunately betrothed in 1436 at the age of 7 to Anne Beauchamp (then age 9), second child and daughter of Richard Beauchamp, the then Earl of Warwick. As was the custom, however, this young couple probably only began to share the same household about seven years later in 1443. It was a dual marriage arranged between Neville and Beauchamp families with the primary focus and expectations being on the betrothal of Salisbury's daughter, Cicely, to Warwick's son and heir, Henry Beauchamp. The expectation was that

Henry would inherit the Warwick estates and title with Salisbury's daughter becoming the Countess of Warwick. Unfortunately, the then current Earl of Warwick, his son and heir, Henry and Henry's only daughter, Anne, all died before 1449, resulting in the Warwick and Despencer estates passing to Richard's wife, Anne Beauchamp, and the title, Earl of Warwick, passing to Anne's husband, our own Richard Neville.

Warwick's training/education and marriage appear therefore, to have paid significant dividends. Richard Neville, the younger, appears to have been knighted by Henry VI in, or before, 1445 and thereafter prior to his succession to the Warwick title, served as a personal attendant to the King. At age 20, with his great lineage and based upon his wife's inheritance, he formally received the title, Earl of Warwick, from Henry VI in 1449 and thereby became one of the wealthiest and largest landholders in England. Eleven years later in 1460 with the passing of his father and mother, he augmented these holdings with the inheritance of his parents' interest in the Holland, Montagu and Monthermer Estates making him the premiere Earl in England. His annual disposable income is estimated to have been in excess of £7,000 a year and his landholdings were spread throughout twenty-eight English counties, including over eighty different personal residences. This wealth allowed Warwick to operate financially independent of the Crown and gave him extensive influence, support, and popularity throughout England and Wales. Later, it even enabled him to organize and operate his own navy while Captain of Calais from 1456 to 1469. A self taught sailor and naval tactician, Warwick was one of the first to use England's (albeit his) navy as an instrument of offensive foreign policy.

Because Warwick's story is so entwined with the alleged making and unmaking of kings, his relationship to the Crown, and his potential right of succession to it, requires some explanation. As noted, Warwick was the second cousin to Henry VI and first cousin once

removed to Henry V besides being the great great grandson of Edward III. Did Warwick have some claim or right to succeed to the throne of England? Arguably, yes, but it was probably not a viable claim. Warwick's claim to the throne was through his grandmother, Joan Beaufort, youngest child and only daughter of John of Gaunt, the third son of Edward III and John's mistress, Katherine Swynford. In 1397, as a favor to John of Gaunt and in recognition of services rendered by his uncle John, Richard II, by act of Parliament, legitimized the four bastard children of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford in 1397 following John and Katherine's marriage the year before.¹⁸ This placed the four Beaufort children and their issue, of which Warwick would be one, in the line of succession to the throne. However, once Richard II had been deposed, his successor and the founder of the House of Lancaster, Henry IV, being the oldest son of John of Gaunt by his first wife, Blanche of Lancaster, took steps to limit the "Beaufort" line. While he confirmed the legitimization of these bastard children of John of Gaunt, he provided in his confirmation, without any affirmation by Parliament, that no Beaufort could succeed to the throne. It has been suggested that any subsequent king, including Henry VI, could undo what a prior king had unilaterally done and without the ascent or confirmation of Parliament, but the fact is that no subsequent king ever did.¹⁹ Furthermore, no Beaufort had ever challenged this exclusion from the line of succession imposed by Henry IV. Thus Warwick, a grandson of the youngest Beaufort child, and thus well down the line of succession, never did either. As we shall see, this interdiction did not at all preclude Warwick from considering himself the equal of any sitting English king in most matters and certainly not from viewing himself as an independent source of English power.²⁰

¹⁸ Goodman, p. 159.

¹⁹ Storey, p. 74.

²⁰ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 200.

Warwick – Evaluations by Historians and Observers of History.

How has Warwick been viewed by historians over time and how should he be evaluated by us today?

In his final metamorphosis in 1470, our man Warwick had supported the deposition of the sitting King, Edward IV of the House of York, in favor of the readeption of Henry VI and the House of Lancaster and promptly caused England to ally with Louis XI of France in a declared war against the Duke of Burgundy. With the understandable exception of contemporary historians and observers seeking to extol the virtues of the Yorkists and their Burgundian allies, almost all other recorded narratives from the 15th Century view Warwick as a great man; “the most popular man of the age, universally beloved and esteemed,” being “even worthy of the Crown itself.”²¹ Even Shakespeare in his history plays, *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*, while presenting a picture of the terrible chaos and destruction that occurred during the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV, depicts Warwick, albeit a composite figure, as the “pattern of true nobility” and “another tragic chivalric hero brought low by the debased times in which he lived.”²² The negative contemporary opinions written by supporters of the House of York during Edward IV’s second reign together with the Burgundian observers remained unpublished or un-translated until the Victorian era of the 19th Century, a delay of nearly four centuries.²³

With the translation and/or discovery of these sources and with a vision of the past examined through the eyes of the enlightenment and the enhanced importance of the state, the conclusions about, and opinions of, Warwick, his actions and motives suddenly changed in

²¹ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 4.

²² Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 191-193.

²³ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 3.

the 19th Century, becoming dramatically, and for the most part unrelentingly, negative.²⁴ Such descriptions as “he was the last great feudal nobleman who ever made himself dangerous to a reigning King” or “his policy throughout seems to have been selfish and treacherous and his removal was an unquestionable blessing to his country” typified the descriptions of Warwick by the historians of the 19th Century.²⁵

Even through the 20th Century, the general position of historians has been highly critical of Warwick and severely denigrating with respect to his motives, especially in the eyes of those historians who thought highly of Edward IV, the King that Warwick allegedly made and then broke a short decade later.²⁶ More recently in the 21st Century, A. J. Pollard, in early 2007, published a new examination of Warwick, attempting to set aside the post enlightenment perspective of the 19th Century and the clear biases of contemporary Yorkists and Burgundian chroniclers, in an effort to evaluate and understand Warwick as he would have been judged and understood by his contemporaries in the 15th Century.²⁷ It is only through such “corrected lenses” that we can hope to reach some pragmatic and hopefully insightful estimates of the nature of this man and his motives. Such an examination, I suggest, will most likely not lead to a conclusion that Warwick was morally corrupt from the beginning, nor will it suggest that he was a candidate for sainthood throughout his life. Instead, I believe such an examination of Warwick’s major decisions from 1453 to 1471 will reflect the combined impact of the attitudes and expectations of the common man of the period toward a man that they considered to be a “great man,” the often inexplicable actions of Warwick’s peers, and the politics of government in the 15th Century. The impact of these dynamic forces arguably effected a fundamental change in Warwick as an individual, and

²⁴ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 5.

²⁵ J. Gardiner, *The Houses of Lancaster and York (1984)*, p. 186; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 5.

²⁶ Carpenter, pp. 173, 181; Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 6; 161, 183, 311, 313.

²⁷ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 81; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 28; Storey, pp. 93-104; Kendall, p. 24.

more importantly, a change in his motives. Between 1453 and 1471, Warwick appears to have morphed from a point of believing that he must and should wield the power at his disposal to protect himself, into a period of years during which he himself appears to have taken enormous political and physical risks for the “common good,” but at the end being driven to a point where his motivation disappointingly seems to reek of self interest and the grasping for individual power.

Warwick’s Decisions – For the “Common Weal” or For Self?

Having briefly described the state of England in the mid-15th Century and introduced our main character, let us now examine what appear to be the five major decision points in Warwick’s adult life beginning in 1453 and ending in 1471 in an effort to observe this transition in his motives and in his character.

1. 1453: Decision to Join the House of York.

The first decision point for Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, that I will examine is the decision made by him, and interestingly by the entire Neville family, in 1453 to support Richard, Duke of York, Warwick’s uncle in his struggle against Edmond Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and others serving as the close personal advisors to the enfeebled King Henry VI of England. It was this initial early decision by the young Earl (then age 24) that completely changed the course of his life, the future of the Neville family and the history of England.

To place this decision in context, we must appreciate the fact that the Neville family had been important, active supporters of the ruling House of Lancaster from its inception in 1399 through the date of this decision in 1453.²⁸ Warwick’s grandfather, Ralph Neville, First Earl of Westmorland, actively supported Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, when he came ashore at Ravenspur in 1399 intent on deposing the then sitting, last Plantagenet King,

²⁸ Oman, pp. 15-16; Storey, p. 109; Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 14-15; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 13.

Richard II, grandson of Edward III. Having assisted in establishing the House of Lancaster as the ruling dynasty with the coronation of Henry Bolingbroke as Henry IV of England, Ralph Neville worked assiduously in the north of England to put down the inevitable rebellions that followed this abrupt change in royal dynasties, including his suppression of the rebellion by the Percy family in the north of England and their efforts to reestablish the Plantagenets. In recognition for his services, Henry IV granted Ralph the title, First Earl of Westmorland. Significantly for Warwick, Ralph married well on his second encounter with that institution by betrothing Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III, and his mistress, Katherine Swynford. Ralph continued his active support of the House of Lancaster and its second monarch, Henry V, by campaigning with Henry V in France during the continuation of 100 Years War. The heroic efforts of Henry V and the supporters of the House of Lancaster, like the Nevilles, resulted in England controlling a significant portion of what is now France, temporarily culminating, as mentioned earlier in the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. The 100 Years War with France, of which the Treat of Troyes was only one of several interludes, continued after Henry V's death in 1422 until 1449, by which time almost all of the territory in France previously controlled by England had been lost back to the French, with exception of Calais. Ralph's oldest son, Richard, subsequently Earl of Salisbury, who was Warwick's father, continued the warrior tradition of the Neville family fighting in England's losing cause against the French into the late 1440's, including serving in France under Richard Duke of York.

The Neville support for the House of Lancaster continued during some of the more difficult times for that dynasty. In addition to the significant losses of territory and men in the ending period of the 100 Years War, as mentioned earlier England was forced to endure a virtual vacuum of leadership resulting from the coronation of Henry VI, oldest son of Henry

V, who, at best, was simple minded, and more pragmatically, was incompetent to govern even himself. This vacuum of leadership allowed any well positioned, unscrupulous individual to manipulate the King for that individual's and his family's self-interest. These conditions and the lawlessness and feuding that took hold of England in the late 1440's and early 1450's, later named "bastard feudalism," culminated in a rising in June of 1450 of the commons and some gentry in the southern county of Kent under the leadership of Jack Cade. The rebels who followed Cade complained of the social injustices inflicted on the commons by the evil advisors to the King, the loss of territory and revenue to France and the general lack of justice in the country.²⁹ While the criticisms put forth by the rebels were accurate, the threat to the internal social order, to say nothing of the individual self-interests of the King's counselors, resulted in swift and forceful repression of this rebel movement. While Warwick and his father were aware that reforms were probably necessary, their continued support for the ruling dynasty caused them to be involved in the raising of men at arms to assist in the defense of the King and the repression of Cade's rebellion.³⁰

Having observed this rising, in which some claim he was personally involved, Richard, Duke of York, a potential claimant to the throne, returned from his virtual exile in Ireland in September of 1450. York had seen and heard enough. He knew that the source of the problem was the immediate advisors to the King, including the recently beheaded Duke of Suffolk and Edmond Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. Somerset had just returned from France, having overseen the destruction of the English army by the French in connection with the loss of all of Normandy except for Calais. Soon after York's return, he confronted Henry VI, first pledging his loyalty to that King and his belief in the Crown, but citing the losses in France

²⁹ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 26.

³⁰ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 22.

and the recent civil unrest as a mandate for reform and the removal of those who had led “King and Country” into these disasters. King Henry, being totally under the control of Somerset and others at the time, was unable to change the course of events or control his advisors.³¹ York’s diplomatic and constitutional efforts went unheard and/or ignored. Out of sheer frustration with the constitutional process of petitioning the King, York in March of 1452 raised an army and confronted the King at Dartford, near London, in an effort to underscore the seriousness of the situation. As in 1450 in response to Cade’s revolt, the Nevilles, both Salisbury and his son, Warwick, again responded to the King’s call to arms and were in support of the King at Dartford. They were sent as part of the negotiating contingent to meet with the Duke of York in an effort to avoid bloodshed. The negotiations appeared to go well and York was promised by the King’s representatives, apparently with the King’s approval, that Somerset would be removed from office and the reforms sought by York implemented if York would agree to disband his army and swear allegiance to the King. Based upon the integrity of the negotiating team, most importantly Salisbury and Warwick, York agreed to the settlement and disbanded his army.

Traveling, as agreed, to the King’s encampment, York entered the King’s tent with the Nevilles only to find Somerset standing at the right hand of the King, having retained his original position of power over the King. York was effectively taken prisoner, returned to London with the King and forced to pledge fealty to the King in St. Paul’s Church before all of the assembled peers.³²

Given this lengthy history of support and loyalty to the House of Lancaster, through and including the negotiations with York at Dartford in 1452, what changed for Warwick and

³¹ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 70-73; Kendall, p. 24; Griffiths, pp. 687-690.

³² Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 81; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 28; Storey, pp. 93-104; Kendall, p. 24.

why did he and the Neville family elect to thereafter support Richard, Duke of York and the House of York? Before we can attempt any effort to climb inside the 15th Century mind of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, there are certain documented facts and events, which require consideration as they appear to have contributed to the decision under examination. First, it must be remembered that Henry Bolingbroke, the founder of the House of Lancaster was the oldest son of John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III, by his first wife, Blanche of Lancaster. The Nevilles were descendents of John of Gaunt's second family (the "Beauforts") and his subsequent marriage to Katherine Swynford. Richard, Duke of York, was similarly, but more directly, descended from Edward III; first in order of seniority, from Edward III's second son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, through the female line (Anne Mortimer), and secondly through the male line he was a descendant of Edward's fourth son, Edmund, Duke of York. To make the relationship of York and Warwick even closer, York married Salisbury sister, Cicely Neville. Accordingly, York was Warwick's uncle and Salisbury's brother-in-law.³³ This strong familial relationship cannot be ignored in understanding Neville's decision to support York.

During the period from the late 1440's through 1453, the Nevilles were beginning to encounter increasing conflict with the Percy family in the north of England. Much of the north of England had been under the control of the Percys prior to their rising in 1405, which rising was put down by Neville's grandfather, Ralph, First Earl of Westmorland. Accordingly, the Percys had been largely discredited by the Neville's early in the 15th Century and spent nearly the next half century reestablishing their position in the north of England. The conflicts between these families became more violent resulting in outright attacks by the Percys on the Neville family, including the Battle of Heworth on August 10,

³³ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 31; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 25-26.

1453, from which the Nevilles emerged victorious. Similarly, in October 1453, the armed forces of the Percys and the Nevilles confronted each other for three days near York, ending in a bloodless negotiated truce.³⁴ However, the feuding and attacks continued and the Crown was unable in the case of the Nevilles and the Percys, just as in the case of many other interfamily squabbles in England, to control the parties or mandate a peaceful settlement. Given the wealth and stature of York, and the propensity of the times to “tie one’s star” to the next larger or similarly large magnate for support, it was natural for the Nevilles to consider York for possible support in their political, if not physical, fight with the Percys.

More critical to the decision, however, appears to be the conflict that arose between 1452 and 1453 between the Nevilles, specifically Warwick, and Edmond Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. This dispute centered primarily on the significant landholdings held by Warwick as a result of his wife’s inheritances as an heiress of at least four major English families (e.g., Warwick, Despencer, Holland and Montagu). Using all legal means possible Warwick sought to confirm his wife’s inheritance and thus his own control of these major estates, while Somerset, being land poor, but politically powerful, sought to use his influence with the Crown to control these same income producing properties for himself. Somerset was successful in several cases in obtaining grants from the King of lands, of which Warwick and his wife had taken possession and in which they had been granted title by legal means. Warwick’s respect for the institution of the Crown left him with no alternative but to seek the removal of Somerset from his current position of influence and control over the person of the King.³⁵

³⁴ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 86-90; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 24.

³⁵ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 76; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 22-24; Carpenter, p. 116.

As these three factors of blood relation, ongoing violent feuds with the Percys and conflicts with Somerset reached “critical mass,” a disaster struck England which presented both the possibility and need for Warwick to consider other means to remedy his difficulties. On August 24, 1453, while traveling to a country house for a hunting party, Henry VI suffered a mental breakdown that left him in a catatonic state, unable to communicate with anyone and with complete amnesia of the eighteen months that he remained in this state of suspended animation.³⁶ At a point of great tension internationally and domestically, England was left with a living King who could not act or speak. Initially, the intimate advisory group attempted to rule in Henry’s name and not disclose his condition to the public. Subsequent events, however, including the birth of his son after eight years of a barren marriage and the death of the then sitting Chancellor, Cardinal Kemp, spurred the peers into action.³⁷ No one but the King or the King’s approved representative was in a position to appoint a successor to Cardinal Kemp as Chancellor. Clearly England had to be ruled, but had to be ruled on Henry’s behalf, it was suggested, by a Council just as it had been during Henry’s minority years (age nine months to age fourteen). From August of 1453 to October of 1453, in light of all the factors then present and the enhanced significance of Richard, Duke of York, as the former presumptive heir to the throne and now potentially if Henry were to die, a candidate for Regent, the Nevilles, both Salisbury and Warwick, made the decision to support York in his efforts to unseat Somerset in exchange for York’s support for the Nevilles in their fight with both Somerset and the Percys.³⁸ This changed position became most evident when a Council of peers was called in London in October, 1453 by the Duke of Somerset and others. Salisbury and Warwick were invited but York was excluded. At the Neville’s insistence,

³⁶ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 90.

³⁷ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 97.

³⁸ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 91; Kendall, p. 24; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 26.

however, it was agreed that York must be invited. York arrived on November 12, 1453, to assume a major role in the Council rule of England during Henry's incapacity.

Based upon the agenda of the key players, not the least of which were York and Warwick, Somerset was indicted and sent to the Tower shortly after the King's Council began to meet. The Council's attention then became focused on both Queen Margaret's petition to be appointed Regent and the question of the appointment of a successor for Cardinal Kemp as Chancellor. On March 25, 1454, the Council nominated, and Parliament approved, York as Protector of England and Captain of Calais until such time as Henry VI recovered.³⁹

In evaluating this first decision in light of our effort to determine the motivation and hence the character of Warwick, the question becomes why did Warwick ostensibly cease to support the House of Lancaster in favor of Richard, Duke of York? As of 1453, at least from the written record, it appears clear that not even York favored, or was even considering, the removal of Henry VI as the King of England.⁴⁰ This appears to be the case even in spite of what appears to be York's superior claim of succession to the throne. Both Richard, Duke of York, and the Nevilles on numerous occasions between 1450 and 1453 had affirmed their allegiance and support to the existing monarchy. Their complaint was with those who controlled the feeble King. Accordingly, it appears that neither York nor Warwick were trying to unmake or make any King.⁴¹

The question becomes whether their motivation was one of self-interest or the public good otherwise known as the "common weal." Certainly the loss of France, and the lawlessness and injustices being suffered by the commons throughout the country, as evidenced by the manifestos published during Cade's rebellion in 1450, suggested strongly

³⁹ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 97.

⁴⁰ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 26; but see Carpenter, p. 21

⁴¹ Griffiths, p. 694.

that corrective action needed to be taken. However, since 1450 some progress had been made and the lot of the common man had improved. The events that clearly brought the situation to a head in 1453, other than the catatonic state of the King, were the actions taken by Somerset directly against Warwick and the inheritances Warwick was attempting to secure for his wife, Anne Beauchamp. Were Warwick's motives, therefore, greed and self-interest? Since the Nevilles were one of the wealthiest and largest landholding families in England who had always married well, it is arguable that increasing their personal wealth would probably not have been the fundamental reason for their decision to side with York. While the Percys were not on the rise, though troublesome, they could be controlled and were controlled successfully by the Nevilles. The desire to silence or eliminate Somerset and his challenges to the Warwick inheritances would appear to have provided a more immediate and urgent basis for collaboration with York. This reasoning would suggest that self defense and preservation of what one had legally inherited were Warwick's principal motives, rather than any intent to grab or take more than that which the law had already declared was left to them. Accordingly, it appears both logical and well supported by the events that occurred that the Neville decision to support Richard, Duke of York in 1453 was not an act at the time intended to subvert the Crown, nor was it necessarily intended primarily to serve the public good. It certainly was an act of self-defense and self-preservation in a period of rampant anarchy.⁴² A period during which without the firm intervention of a decisive King, if one did not defend one's own rights, no one else could or would. Given the potential allies available and the circumstances, it can be argued that any magnate similarly situated would have made the same election without in any way acting contrary to their oaths of loyalty to the Crown or being accused of greed or avarice.

⁴² Carpenter, p. 134.

In the context of the future history of England, however, this decision marked the initial choosing of sides and separation of parties in a conflict discussed earlier, known as the Wars of the Roses. While advertised broadly as wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, this initial decision demonstrates clearly that the lines were not then well defined. More specifically, Richard, Duke of York, his family, the Nevilles and some, but not many others, found themselves initially in direct opposition, not necessarily with the Crown, but with the group of nobles surrounding the Crown that sat upon the enfeebled head of Henry VI. This party was led by Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, who at the time of Neville's decision, became much more intimately involved in the politics of England as she had become the mother of the Prince of Wales, the heir presumptive to the Crown of England. Having had her petition to be appointed Regent rejected by the Council, she sought quickly to surround herself with a "Court Party," who shared her distrust, dislike and/or insecurity concerning the Duke of York, the Nevilles and others. When the Court Party controlled Henry, they ruled England in Henry's name, otherwise they existed as an adversarial party (ostensibly Lancastrian) in opposition to the party led by Richard, Duke of York and later by Warwick. This factional division in the government led some twenty months later to the commencement of hostilities at St. Albans on May 22, 1455, the date pointed to by many as the beginning of the Wars of the Roses. At this initial engagement, which consisted of a short skirmish on the streets of the town of St. Albans, the Yorkists were the clear victors, eliminating during the course of battle, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Clifford, the evil "handlers" of the King, and taking the confused Henry VI into custody for return to London.

While some historians place the Neville decision to support York much later in the 1450's,⁴³ evidence that this decision had been made and for the defensive reasons suggested can be found in the events that soon followed. Soon after York was named as Protector of the King on March 12, 1454, to serve during the unpredictable balance of Henry's illness, he appointed Warwick's father, the Earl of Salisbury, as the senior advisor to the King as Chancellor of England, a position normally delegated to a member of the clergy. Additionally, subsequent to the suggested date of this decision more physical evidence can be found that the alliance was in place much before 1455 in the nature of the forces that joined with York at the above described first battle of St. Albans. Salisbury and Warwick both raised armed forces in May of 1455 after being numbered among those, including York, not invited to the special Council at Leicester to discuss the safety of the King. It was then the joint forces of the Nevilles and York that confronted the King Henry and his army at St. Albans and routed them, eliminating the King's immediate advisors. As a result of St. Albans, York and the Nevilles were in control of the King and the kingdom, cementing the strong alliance that existed between these two families.

2. 1460: Decision to Oppose Richard, Duke of York, and the Attempted Deposition of Henry VI.

The second decision point for the Earl of Warwick occurred a little over seven years after the first decision point. We left the Earl in 1453 supporting Richard, Duke of York against the likes of the Duke of Somerset, who manipulated the monarch largely for personal benefit and gain. Fast forwarding to 1460, we find our man, a mature 29 year old Warwick, hero of the first battle of St. Albans and perhaps slayer of his arch enemy the Duke of Somerset during that engagement. In the intervening five years since St. Albans (1455),

⁴³ Carpenter, p. 144.

Warwick had seen the Yorkist star rise, set and then remain flat on the horizon while his fellow peers struggled to arrive at an appropriate formula for defining Kingship and their role in the leadership of England for the coming century. Warwick had seen his mentor, York, acknowledged as Protector of England for two short intervals in place of an incompetent King. He had seen fatal blows dealt to the evil counselors of the King at St. Albans in 1455, and had seen himself appointed in 1456 as Captain of the Calais fortress and garrison, and thus in control of the only standing army in England. Then, in 1458, Warwick found himself amazingly processing down the main isle of St. Paul's Cathedral in London arm and arm with the heirs of the men he had sent to their deaths at St. Albans.⁴⁴

A little over a year following this "love day" celebration at St. Paul's, Warwick found himself again on the field of battle confronting the Queen and her Court party at Ludford Bridge. On October 12, 1459, York and the Nevilles, however, were humiliatingly routed when Warwick's troops from Calais realized, contrary to Warwick's assurances, that they would, in fact, be confronting their liege lord, Henry VI, on the field of battle⁴⁵. These troops disappeared in the night back to Calais as did many of the other Yorkists supporters. Realizing their cause was hopeless, York and his younger son, the Earl of Rutland, likewise made their escape in the night to Ireland while Salisbury, Warwick and York's oldest son, Edward, Earl of March (the future Edward IV), engaged a fast ship back to Calais. Warwick spent the winter of 1459 and the spring of 1460 planning and preparing to return to England with York, including conducting raids on Sandwich on the south of English coast to obtain needed supplies and break up the Lancastrian preparations for raids on Calais.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Griffith, p. 806; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 36; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 164; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁶ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 175.

In June of 1460, having apparently conferred extensively with York in Ireland, Warwick, Salisbury and the Earl of March returned to England, landing at Sandwich, and proceeded north unopposed to London where they were joyfully admitted to that City. They promptly proceeded to Northampton, just north of Oxford, and defeated the Queen, who was being supported by the Scots. Henry VI was with his Queen at Northampton and was captured by Warwick near the end of the battle. Having now changed hands for the third time between the Yorkists and Lancastrian parties, Henry was escorted with appropriate dignities by Warwick back to London.

Having defeated the Queen's army in the field and having again taken control of the King, the Yorkists would appear to have accomplished all that was required to control the governance of England. The unexpected then occurred in the form of the actions of Richard, Duke of York following his return to England from Ireland in September 1460. Research tells us that during the Yorkist exile in the winter of 1459-1460, Warwick traveled to Ireland and met with York for a considerable period of time.⁴⁷ Furthermore, immediately following York's landing in England, it also appears that Warwick and he met again for a short series of talks prior to York's progress to London. We have no accounts of these talks that were personal between York and Warwick, but it can be reasonably surmised that the plan developed by them and carried out by Warwick in early 1460 appeared to have gone well. Warwick had certainly achieved all that could have been set as objectives by these Yorkists lords: (1) the successful landing in England of the Yorkist army; (2) the admission to London of that army led by Warwick and York's son, Edward, Earl of March; (3) the raising of an even larger army that could proceed against, and defeat, the Queen in July, 1470 at Northampton, capturing the King in the process; and followed by, (4) Warwick's triumphant

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 176; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 42; Griffiths, pp. 855-856.

return to London having achieved substantial control of the King and the kingdom by midsummer 1470. What more needed to be accomplished to satisfy the Yorkists' agenda?⁴⁸

As apparently planned, York then landed in Wales on September 8, 1460, and processed regally to London, taking a full month to reach that destination. York's real surprise for his Yorkist supporters was presented upon his entering London, and more specifically upon his entering Westminster Hall in which Parliament was then sitting in session. York had the sword of state carried before him, point up, as is done for the monarch, and displayed the coat of arms of the Duke of Clarence, his direct ancestor through the female line to Edward III, a claim, as previously noted, superior to the one through which Henry IV and the Lancastrians, had based their claim to throne upon the deposition of Richard II.⁴⁹

After more than thirty years, York was now apparently asserting his superior claim to the throne of England. The Hall was silent. As if the symbolic display of the Clarence coat of arms was not sufficient, York proceeded down the center of the Hall, approached the then vacant throne and placed his hands on that seat as if to claim it was his own. When challenged by Archbishop Bourghier as to whether his gesture suggested a wish to speak with the King, York replied that he knew no one with whom he needed to consult before taking this seat.⁵⁰ York subsequently had the King removed from the royal chambers and took them as his own.

Warwick and his father, the Earl of Salisbury, were present in the Hall as were most of the peers of the realm at the time. All, especially including Warwick, appeared to be in complete shock and disbelief at York's apparent coup d'état. All of the actions that had been necessary to achieve control of the realm and the security of the kingdom, had been

⁴⁸ Griffiths, p. 867, Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 867.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 867, Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 187; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 43.

accomplished at Northampton. What could York be suggesting; the setting aside of an anointed King? The deposition of Henry VI? The end of the House of Lancaster? The silence in Westminster that day was deafening and spoke volumes of York's misjudgment of the situation and his support.⁵¹

York's assertion was unnecessary, if not offensive, to those who respected and were pledged to support the throne held by a sitting, anointed King, regardless of how feeble he may have become. Warwick immediately arranged for an audience with York and made it clear that neither the Nevilles nor Parliament would support the action that York suggested.⁵² York asserted, to the contrary, that at this time there was no alternative given the state of the kingdom; a new dynasty was needed to replace the evil usurping Lancastrians. York's claim to the throne was examined by the judges and by Parliament, with the judges asserting that it was beyond their jurisdiction. There was no immediate precedent for the circumstances that then existed, but it was clear that an immediate compromise had to be worked out among York, Parliament and the King. After several days of negotiations, led primarily by Warwick, a compromise in the form of an "Act of Accord" was reached on terms similar to the Treaty of Troyes settled by Henry V with the King of France in 1420. This Accord, subsequently approved by Parliament and the King on October 31, 1460, provided that Henry would remain on the throne for the remainder of his life, but declared that at Henry's death, Richard, Duke of York, and his heirs would succeed to the throne of England⁵³. The immediate result was the disinheritation of the son of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, Edward, Prince of Wales, which immediately earned York and Warwick the enmity of the Queen, one would think, forever.

⁵¹ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 28.

⁵² Griffiths, p. 868; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 189; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 44-45.

⁵³ Griffiths, pp. 868-869; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 190; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 45-46.

The interesting question again presented is whether Warwick reacted in opposition to York's claim to the throne for reasons of his own self-interest or because he thought it was in the best interest of the country? Before turning to that question, part of the answer turns on the exceptional reaction of shock and awe by Warwick to York's actions at Westminster that day in October, 1460. If, as has been documented, York and Warwick spent considerable time together while York was in Ireland and subsequently conferred in England prior to York's arrival in London, is it possible that Warwick could have misunderstand York's plan? Is it possible they never talked about York's claim to the throne? Is it possible that York simply changed his mind subsequent to their last discussion about the plan for proceeding with the administration of England? In light of Warwick's exceptional popularity with the commons and his recent success in working with them to defeat the Queen at Northampton, Warwick could arguably be said to truly have had the pulse of the people. It was clear from the reaction of some of the fighting forces at Ludlow in 1469 and the tremendous respect that the magnates as a group had for the anointed King, regardless of how incompetent or enfeebled he was, that Warwick accurately projected the sense of the country in not wishing to push the "deposition" button at this time.⁵⁴ Such conduct by York clearly demonstrated his lack of good judgment, which he had similarly demonstrated in 1452 at Dartford. To have sided with York would have been divisive, and more than likely unsuccessful, given the general respect the people had for the office of the King and the very strong reluctance they had to being part of a deposition at the present time. In addition, it would seem that Warwick had little to gain personally, other than the gratitude of York, in siding with York in this claim. I suggest that York resisted York's plan with the intention of, and motivated by, service to the "common weal." The Yorkists had everything they needed to bring peace and

⁵⁴ Griffiths, p. 868; but see, Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 45.

order to England. Further divisiveness would have only been counterproductive and potentially destructive for the people and for England.

A more skeptical historian has suggested that perhaps we are looking at a “good cop,” “bad cop” scenario, in which York’s actions and Warwick’s opposition were carefully “staged” in order to create the strongest possible negotiating position with Parliament.⁵⁵ The ultimate goal of such a charade could be nothing more than the “Act of Accord” that resulted. While Warwick played a major role in the negotiations and in the ultimate proposal for the settlement that resulted in the Act of Accord, it would seem to be too risky a play to have held serious attraction for either men. Truly, this view suggests an examination of history through the jaundiced eye of a 21st Century politician as opposed to that of the 15th Century magnate. York had previously demonstrated his ability to incorrectly analyze a political situation, and thus, his conduct, while shocking to Warwick and the other magnates, was more likely a reoccurrence of this same demonstrated lack of good judgment. It would not appear to have been, as “Black Adder” might have contended, the product of a “clever plan.”

3. 1461: Decision to Make a King or Not.

The third decision point in our discussion for Warwick occurs in February 1461. This was experientially for many Yorkists a lifetime later, but chronologically only four short months following the adoption of the Act of Accord. In the short interim period, the Yorkists cause had been dealt a most severe blow. On December 30, 1460, while at his principal residence in Yorkshire, Sandal Castle, York was surprised during a nighttime sortie outside the castle walls by a superior Lancastrian force led by the new Duke of Somerset and Anthony Trollope. York and his second oldest son, the Earl of Rutland, were killed during the battle and the Yorkists forces were routed. More devastating to Warwick personally, his father, the

⁵⁵ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 45.

Earl of Salisbury, was captured after the battle and the next day was brought to Pontefract Castle and there lynched and beheaded. The Queen then had the heads of all three Yorkist lords placed on pikes above the Michel Gate to the city of York, with the Duke of York's head fitted with a cocked paper crown.

It is at this time that some early historians and contemporary foreign observers suggest that Warwick decided to place Edward, Earl of March, the son and heir of the now deceased Duke of York, on the throne of England and “make him” Edward IV, King of England.⁵⁶ However, this point of view begs the real question that modern historians have examined more closely, which is, “Did Warwick in fact place Edward on the throne or did Edward more accurately place himself there?” More specifically, was Warwick in this instance actually a “king maker?” However, whether he merely supported Edward or “made him king,” our further inquiry asks what were his motives in doing whatever he did, and were they selfish or public minded?

To examine the first question, we must understand the intervening events leading up to Edward's arrival in London on February 27, 1461. Having heard of the death and execution of his father, uncle and brother at the hands of the Queen's forces, Edward, then lodged in the city of York, proceeded south to join forces with Warwick. Learning that the Lancastrian Earls (e.g., Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, together with the Earl of Wiltshire), were raising an army in Wales, Edward instead turned back north, certainly with the cause of the House of York in his mind, but more likely with revenge in his heart. The presence of the latter is strongly suggested by the fact that Edward, having come from York, had been painfully aware of the degrading treatment given the heads of the murdered Yorkists leaders. Having observed what appeared to be a favorable omen in the form of three rising suns at nearby

⁵⁶ Oman, pp. 112-113; Kendall, pp. 95-96; Commynes, *Memories*, p. 413.

Mortimer's Cross on the morning of February 2, 1461, Edward proceeded to achieve a significant military victory over the Lancastrians, including the capture and beheading of Owen Tudor, grandfather of Henry Tudor, who would ironically bring an end to the House of York in 1485 and found the Tudor dynasty. At age 19, Edward had proved himself to be an exceptional battlefield commander and able warrior, who, after Mortimer's Cross, continued on his march south to London, clearly savoring his victory and the adulation of the people.

Some two weeks later, Warwick heading north from London to meet the pillaging forces of Queen Margaret suffered a humiliating defeat at the second battle of St. Albans on February 17, 1461, losing custody of Henry VI to the Lancastrians, the fourth change of hands for Henry as King. Shortly thereafter, Warwick and Edward met on the road south to London with much to discuss about their next move.

The question for purposes of our inquiry is whether the decisions reached during these discussions, which clearly led to their combined march on London and the deposition of Henry VI, were dominated by Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick or Edward, Earl of March, the future Edward IV of England. Was Warwick the king maker of Edward IV?

Consistent with the nickname first bestowed upon Warwick ("Regum Creator") by John Major in his 16th Century work "History of Greater Britain," it has generally been assumed by many modern biographers of Richard Neville before 1980 that the above described march on London by Edward and Warwick, immediately followed by the usurpation of Henry VI in March, 1461, was the first example of "king making" by Warwick.⁵⁷ More recent historians and biographers of Neville in this period have concluded instead that such an opinion (which is heavily influenced by foreign observers who were prone to exaggerate Warwick's influence) does not allow sufficiently for (and, in fact,

⁵⁷ *The Countess of Warwick*, p. 165

understates) Edward's own personal role in the events of which he was to now play a central role.⁵⁸

Others, still simply disinclined to proclaim Warwick a "king maker," have stated that Edward and his supporters (including Warwick) had no practical choice but to seize the throne.⁵⁹ After the breach of the Act of Accord by the Lancastrians in connection with the murder of York and Salisbury at Wakefield, and with Henry under the positive control of his Queen, Edward could not accept Henry as King as this would put him in the same position his father had been in throughout the 1450's. However, after Edward's brilliant victory at Mortimer's Cross, there would certainly have been attached to his name the label "traitor," making any potential reconciliation dangerous to say the least. Queen Margaret of Anjou, on the other hand, could not accept the Earl of March as King in place of her son, Edward, Prince of Wales. For these historians, the only available alternative was to depose the sitting King and do away with both him and his Queen.

Most recently, Anne Crawford, wife of the deceased English medieval historian, Charles Ross, has gone so far as to obliterate the label "king maker" from the description of Richard Neville in 1461 by stating that:

"It is quite clear that it was Edward's decision to assume the Crown and that the young King was very far from being a puppet in the hands of his older cousin, Warwick."⁶⁰

While we cannot know for sure what was discussed by Edward and Warwick on February 23, 1461, in the Cotswold town of Chipping Norton, a reasoned analysis of the known facts would appear to support Edward as the prime mover and implementer of the

⁵⁸ Storey, p. 33; Oman, pp. 112-113; Kendall, pp. 95-96.

⁵⁹ Griffiths, p. 873.

⁶⁰ Crawford, p. 22.

decision to remove Henry from the throne. This was a decision, however, that required the active and full support of the entire Neville family, including, most definitely, Warwick. To the point of this analysis, it is known that Edward was coming off a major military victory against superior forces just before his nineteenth birthday at Mortimer's Cross, in which he had earned the respect of his army as an aggressive and effective military commander. By contrast, Warwick was still reeling eastward just six short days after his humiliating defeat at the second battle of St. Albans. The defeat was a crushing blow to the Yorkist cause, not only because their hero, the defensive Warwick, had been soundly trounced by the Queen's forces, but more importantly because King Henry VI, the most important pawn on the English chessboard of power, had been captured and was then under the control of the Lancastrians.

Warwick had embarrassed himself and the Yorkists by taking the unnecessary risk of bringing Henry from the security of London to the battlefield at St. Albans. For what purpose? To motivate his troops? To put fear into the Lancastrian forces by forcing them to attack the sitting King? No real advantage to bringing Henry to St. Albans is evident when weighed against the risk of losing him back to the Lancastrians. This fact alone may have weighed heavily in the minds of the remaining Yorkists lords, including Edward, in deciding what action to take and who to follow. Warwick had clearly shown poor judgment. Furthermore, the realization of this fact could have had a sobering effect on Warwick who, having severely blundered twice, might have been even more circumspect than ever in taking any further aggressive actions. Viewed in the light of the time and the humiliation of the moment, it appears more likely that Edward would have been the aggressor, while Warwick, not wishing to blunder again, held back in taking any real initiative and merely supported Edward's aggressive leadership. From the standpoint of momentum, as indicated Warwick was reeling east after his defeat, while Edward was charging south towards London following

his stunning victory at Mortimer's Cross. Given his direction and speed of travel, it is possible that York had already made the decision to seize the throne. Edward clearly must have realized that the destruction of the Yorkists nobles and the Yorkist party was the avowed mission of the Queen and the Lancastrian party. With the King in hand, the Lancastrian were certain to label all of the Yorkist leaders as traitors and vow to hunt them down.

Based upon the evidence presented by the summary beheading of Salisbury, Warwick's father, following his capture after the battle of Wakefield and the execution of Lord Bonville following the second battle of St. Albans, notwithstanding the King's personal promise of safety to Bonville, Edward knew that there could be no guaranty of safety as part of any reconciliation and that their fate was sealed if they could not achieve absolute victory in the field. Even if some reconciliation could be achieved, the future did not bode well. In the long term, it was clearly simpler to dispose of an incompetent King and be done with him, rather than be faced with the task of neutralizing so "redoubtable" a Queen as Margaret. Edward knew this for certain as these were the same facts that his father, the Duke of York, had lived with and endured throughout the 1450's. Finally, the speed with which the decision was made to enter London, the quickly acclaimed and choreographed accession to the throne in accordance with all standard traditions, and the nearly immediate departure to seek a final trial by combat with the Lancastrians were all hallmarks of Edward's aggressive and proactive leadership style. Such speed and decisiveness were not the characteristics of the more careful and defensive style of Warwick, especially following his recent blunders while trying to be assertive. Accordingly, it appears unlikely that the deposition of Henry VI and the accession to the throne of Edward IV of England and the House of York were undertaken or directed by

Warwick.⁶¹ Clearly Warwick's support was needed, but he, by no means, was in control of his nephew, Edward. Warwick's motivation was not, as of this date, to control the new King, but more likely was, like the other Yorkists magnates, in part one of self preservation of himself, his family and his estates and in part, the hope that a new young regime would bring peace and prosperity to the realm.

4. 1469: Decision to Break a King or Not.

The fourth decision point, which occurs some eight years later, reflects the next change in Warwick's allegiances. Having taken charge of much of the governance of England, arguably ruling England while Edward reigned, Warwick was the acknowledged leader of England as viewed by both foreign and domestic observers, from the date of Edward's accession in 1461 through the mid-1460's.⁶² At mid-decade, for reasons that will be discussed, Warwick and Edward parted company as part of an intense interpersonal struggle for power in England. The basic dispute between these men was caused by a combination of Edward's explicit assertion of his right to rule as King and the implicit denial by Warwick that he was at all subordinate to the Crown. The latter attitude was evidenced at first by Warwick's effort to control Edward, as the Yorkists had attempted to control Henry in the 1450's and 1460, and then, while arguably maintaining his allegiance to the House of York, by his efforts to conspire with Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, to replace Edward as the Yorkist King of England. While examining briefly how this struggle for power intensified to the breaking point, I will attempt to examine Warwick's motivation in either controlling or setting Edward aside while purporting to remain loyal to the House of York.

⁶¹ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 33; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 54; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 218; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 49-50.

⁶² Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 220-222, 255-256; Kendall, pp. 109-111; Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 63; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 67.

Immediately following the accession of Edward IV to the throne, Edward and Warwick departed London gathering the largest army ever assembled by the Crown for battle in England, with estimates ranging as high as 25,000 men at arms. This Yorkist army proceeded north to bring Henry, the Queen and the Lancastrians to decisive battle. Edward and Warwick understood that the Yorkist dynasty could not be maintained unless the deposed King and his supporters were finally defeated in the field. After an initial encounter at Ferrybridge, during which Warwick was slightly wounded, King Edward confronted Margaret, in company with Henry VI, on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1461, at Towton near the city of York. The two armies, totaling nearly 50,000 men, fought each other in the snow for more than four hours in one of the largest land battles ever to occur in England, with the outcome being the complete destruction of the Lancastrian army. However, the King, the Queen and their son, Edward, escaped to Scotland to fight another day. The Yorkists regime was now secure. Edward thereafter returned to London for his coronation which occurred on June 28, 1461.

After the crushing defeat of the Lancastrians at Towton and the formal coronation of Edward IV, the consensus is that for several years thereafter Edward reigned as King, but he deferred to, and allowed, Warwick to rule England. Edward, it is said, enjoyed the good life of hunting often, eating well and having his way with all ladies he encountered, whether married or not. The gentry and commons were quite willing to accept Edward as their King, seeing him as an active, heroic warrior King, who had captured the Crown through a decisive trial by combat. The general expectation throughout England was that the combined leadership of Edward and Warwick would reform the deficiencies of the Lancastrian regime,

reestablish law and order in the country, and reduce taxation.⁶³ It was believed that Edward, unlike Henry, would be a monarch who lived within his means, and would somehow reestablish English dominion over some of England's lost French territories. From August 1461 to May 1464, Warwick and his brother, John, Earl Montagu, were heavily engaged in the pacification of northern England, especially near the Scottish border, where the last of the Lancastrians, often using Scotland as a refuge, were seeking to foment continued risings in an effort to put Henry VI back on the throne. In addition, to curtail the funding of these Lancastrian efforts, Warwick in 1463 negotiated treaties on Edward's behalf with both Scotland and France to cease all financial aid to the Lancastrians.⁶⁴ Finally, by mid-1464 with the final Yorkists victories at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, the north of England was subdued. The Queen and most of the Lancastrian nobility had fled to the Continent, while King Henry VI, who had escaped capture at the battle of Hexham in 1464, was found the following year wandering about northern England. He was taken into the custody by Warwick, brought to London and placed in the Tower.

In light of the current historical thinking that Warwick had merely supported Edward's decision to seize the English throne as opposed to being the "King maker" of England, and the apparently compatible and mutually beneficial relationship between King Edward and his premier Earl, what would have caused Warwick to consider replacing Edward? What caused the break in their relationship? Were Warwick's motives in making such a change of allegiance sourced in self defense, ambition or the "common weal" of England and its people?

Once again, the definitive answers to these questions has gone to the grave with the participants and observers of late medieval England. The available facts, however, both prior

⁶³ Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 50, 55; Oman, pp. 129-130.

⁶⁴ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 65,

to and after 1469 give us some background with which to surmise the possible answers. First, there clearly appears to have been a break in relationship between Edward and Warwick that resulted in the risings of 1469. The questions concerning when the break occurred and what were its causes has, and continues to, evoke considerable debate among both historians and psychologists.

Chronologically, the earliest recognized rift between these men occurred in May of 1464. Warwick, having firmly established Yorkist control over most of England and Wales, had become a more active participant in negotiations with foreign powers on behalf the King Edward. As noted previously, in late 1463, he had been instrumental in negotiating treaties with both Scotland and France to cease all financial aid to the Lancastrians. These successful treaties had helped greatly in the securing the Yorkist regime. Immediately thereafter, Warwick became heavily engaged in negotiations with France and with other foreign powers for the purposes of identifying a Queen for Edward.

Marriage to a Prince or King was then, and continued for centuries to be, an important element of successful English foreign relations and the establishing of critical alliances between England and other major powers. Evidence of this fact can be seen most readily in the marriages arranged for the immediately preceding Kings: Henry V's marriage to Kathryn Valois, daughter of the King of France in 1420 and Henry VI's marriage to Margaret of Anjou as part of the Treaty of Tours with France in 1445.

As negotiations with the King of France progressed, Edward's opinion and acceptance was sought in September of 1464, specifically with regard to his proposed marriage to the French King's sister-in-law, Bona of Savoy. It was at the time that this betrothal was proposed to Edward that he elected to disclose for the first time to Warwick and the King's Council that he was already married. If this was not sufficiently shocking, it was then

disclosed that this secret marriage had taken place five months earlier, on May 1, 1464, and that his bride, Elizabeth Woodville, was the daughter of an ordinary knight, a person clearly unsuited by birth and background to share the throne of England. The King's Council was shocked and angered, not only because of the lost diplomatic opportunity, but also because they had not been allowed to advise the King and help avoid such a poor decision.⁶⁵ Warwick likewise, we can surmise, was furious for similar reasons, to say nothing of the humiliation his reputation had arguably then suffered in the eyes of the King of France. However, it would appear that the clandestine manner in which Edward's marriage was undertaken, more than the fact of the marriage, was the real cause of substantial damage to the trust that existed between these two men, as well as evidencing the exceptionally poor individual judgment of Edward, the man who was Warwick's anointed King.⁶⁶

The marriage of King Edward to Elizabeth Woodville was a *fait accompli* by September of 1464. All concerned, including Warwick, simply had to accept it and they did. The question in retrospect is "was the secret marriage by Edward the cause of the break with Warwick or was it something more fundamental?" It is certainly true that, given the large family that accompanied Elizabeth Woodville to the throne, there were many more people now close to the King and with whom Warwick would have to compete for the King's undivided attention. Elizabeth Woodville brought with her to London two sons by her prior marriage, her father, Earl Rivers, five eligible brothers and seven unmarried sisters, fourteen in all. To a person, each of these Woodvilles now held a close blood relationship with the Queen of England, and understandably at that time, expected that this would serve as a basis for a significant improvement in their place in society. As King Edward had little in the way

⁶⁵ Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 91-92; Kendall, pp. 186-190; Oman, pp. 162-164.

⁶⁶ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 92; Carpenter, p. 170; Kendall, p. 190; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 56.

of land or privileges that he could economically or feasibly dispense, Edward arranged instead for significant marriages for almost all of the Woodville relations, which resulted in the near total absorption of the available and eligible unmarried heirs of nobility. This marriage market absorption by the Woodvilles left Warwick, the premier Earl of England, who had no male heir, with virtually no suitable candidates for marriages to his two potentially well endowed and high ranking daughters, Isabel and Anne.⁶⁷

Warwick was politically and personally insulted by the fact that such “commoners” had, through the intervention of the King, destroyed his plans to place his daughters with husbands suitable to inherit his and his wife’s estates. As a result, in late 1466, Warwick began holding discussions and inquiries leading to a proposal early in 1467 that his oldest daughter, Isabel, be betrothed to Edward’s next oldest brother, George, Duke of Clarence. When the proposal was presented to the King in March of 1467, the King rejected the idea without hesitation believing instead that his brothers (both George, Duke of Clarence, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester) should be married to foreign princesses as a means of recapturing the opportunity that was lost by his own marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. Clarence, however, being the insecure, younger brother of the then reigning King and only eighteen years old at the time, found the idea to be unacceptable for several reasons. Clarence wanted no part of a foreign bride or the possibility of being required to live in a foreign country. In addition, looking out for his own financial future, assuming Edward and Elizabeth would produce an heir (and possibly a spare), Clarence greatly appreciated the inheritance that would come to him through his wife from the Warwick estates. Such inheritance would literally put him on a par, from a wealth standpoint, with the Crown itself.

⁶⁷ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 92; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 68.

As Edward had no children as of yet, Clarence was the presumptive heir to the throne and Warwick liked the idea of being father of the future Queen of England and father-in-law to the next King of England. Accordingly, notwithstanding Edward's rejection of the proposal, Warwick, with Clarence's agreement, sent emissaries in secret to the Pope Paul II in Rome in order to begin work on obtaining the appropriate dispensation for the marriage between his daughter and Clarence.⁶⁸ This was necessary because George was the son of Isabel's great aunt, Cicely Neville, and thus within the prohibited degree of consanguinity for marriage without a dispensation of the applicable canon law.

While it is true, therefore, that the secret marriage of Edward to Elizabeth Woodville was damaging to Edward's relationship with Warwick, Warwick's immediate response was to find another means of retaining influence over the Yorkist regime through intermarriage with his own family. Accordingly, the consensus of historians, though not universal, seems to be that the marriage by itself was not the cause of the devastating and ultimately disastrous break between these men. More significantly, it is believed that the divergent strategies in foreign policy advocated and pursued by Warwick and Edward, respectively, was the real cause of that break, and that this dispute ultimately served as the basis, in fact and in form, of both the deposition of Edward and his reacquisition of the throne.⁶⁹

Beginning shortly after the marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, it became clear that Edward favored close ties with Burgundy if not a triple alliance among Burgundy, Brittany and England itself against France. Keep in mind that there also remained the unresolved claim of the King of England to be the King of France as a result of the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. While nearly all English holdings in France, except Calais, had been lost, the claim

⁶⁸ Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 77; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 264; Carpenter, p. 172.

⁶⁹ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 258-271; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 59-62; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 72.

remained and Edward wanted to, when he could afford it, reassert that claim.⁷⁰ Warwick, on the other hand, felt the claim was essentially moot. He believed that the key to English economic growth and position on the Continent would be better served by an alliance with Louis XI, King of France. During the years 1464 to 1467, Edward used Warwick to play France and Brittany off against each other in order to force Burgundy to make a more lucrative offer for England's alliance against France. Louis XI of France, however, was no stranger to negotiation and was exceeding clever and manipulative. Warwick was courted by Louis almost as a "third King."⁷¹ In fact, correspondence addressed to the Duke of Milan from his ambassador in Rouen, suggests that as early as 1467, Louis XI was making overtures to Warwick about land that might be given to him if England joined France against the Netherlands, which Louis wanted to absorb.⁷² Shortly thereafter on the accession of Charles the Bold as Duke of Burgundy, Edward underscored these foreign policy differences with Warwick by further cementing the Burgundian alliance through the betrothal of his sister, Margaret of York, to this young, new Duke of Burgundy.

The King's insistence on the Burgundian relationship, his negotiation and signing of agreements with both Brittany and Burgundy in 1467 and the concurrent removal of Warwick's brother, George, Archbishop of York as Chancellor of England, all occurring during Warwick's absence in France and undertaken unilaterally by Edward without any discussion with Warwick, left little doubt that Edward intended to be King and would insist that Warwick be content with being the King's good subject.⁷³ The break had then occurred by action of the King. What would be Warwick's response? At first Warwick retreated to his castle in York for the rest of 1467 and early 1468 refusing to respond to the summons of the

⁷⁰ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 262.

⁷¹ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 198; Oman, p. 170.

⁷² Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 61.

⁷³ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 263; Oman, pp. 171-172.

King, notwithstanding a promise of safe conduct. Rumors also began to circulate at this time that Warwick, albeit out of desperation,⁷⁴ was attempting to suborn the allegiance of Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, supported by the claim that Edward was not the son of Richard, Duke of York but rather a bastard son of a French archer. Clearly, Clarence was under Warwick's influence and was jealous and dissatisfied enough as the presumptive heir to the throne, to be taken in by Warwick's suggestions of greater power and possible succession.

While there were indications of some type of conspiracy in England during 1468, Edward was faced with growing discontent within the regime, both in London and in the countryside, and did not seriously believe that his cousin and brother could be guilty of anything horrible, especially treason. In fact, a reconciliation of sorts was achieved between Warwick and Edward and appeared to continue through the autumn of 1468 and the spring of 1469 evidenced on the record by Warwick's increased attendance at the meetings of the King's Council. At these meetings foreign policy continued to be debated openly between Warwick and Edward, but deference was always given to Edward's position.⁷⁵

In June, 1469 all seemed calm and secure to Edward. Accordingly, he proceeded with his plans for a pilgrimage to Walsingham in the midlands of England. At this point, Warwick, having endured enough of Edward, finally struck. There had been an earlier rising in the north of England in the spring of 1469 by a group of rebels led by one Robin of Redesdale, with that rising having been firmly suppressed. But in late June of 1469 the same Robin of Redesdale appeared again in what became apparent as a rising by a large contingent of Warwick followers proclaiming, in terms reminiscent of York's 1450 manifesto, that their only intent was to remove certain evil counselors from about the King. Surprisingly, this

⁷⁴ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 217; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 66.

⁷⁵ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 263-268; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 60-65.

group of rebels marched south to confront the King, gathering supporters as they came. The King appeared to hesitate, apparently not sure of what to make of this second rising.

Concurrently, in early July, Warwick, with Clarence, Warwick's daughter, Isabel, George Neville, Archbishop of York, and the secretly obtained papal dispensation for the marriage, crossed to Calais where Warwick, as Captain of Calais, reigned almost as an independent power, for the marriage of Isabel to George, Duke of Clarence, brother of the King of England.⁷⁶

Immediately following the marriage Warwick and Clarence issued a manifesto on July 12, 1469, to which was attached a similar manifesto issued by the northern rebels the month before, seeking to cure the ills of the kingdom, as before, by removing the evil counselors about the King, specifically, Earl Rivers, the Queen's father, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Devon and others. Before Warwick could return from Calais, the rebels had met and defeated the King's men, Pembroke and Devon, outside of Banbury at Edgecote on July 26, 1469. Warwick then had the "evil counselors" around the King, including Earl Rivers, John Woodville, and the Earls of Pembroke and Devon, executed. This was an act by Warwick for which there was no authority, especially in light of the fact that these men were not fighting the King, but rather were defending the King against declared rebels.⁷⁷ Shortly thereafter, a shocked King Edward was located and taken into custody by Warwick's brother, George Neville, Archbishop of York, and escorted to Warwick Castle.⁷⁸

It appeared that 1460 was apparently to be repeated a decade later as Warwick, true to the word of his manifesto, intended to, and had, removed the evil counselors of the King and

⁷⁶ Oman, p. 184.

⁷⁷ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 277.

⁷⁸ Oman, p. 189; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 277.

thereafter intended to rule through the anointed King, Edward IV.⁷⁹ In fact, from July to October of 1469, Warwick held two Kings of England captive, Edward IV and Henry VI. However, circumstances of civil unrest in London and in the countryside required the calling out of troops, which only the King could do. Edward, of course refused to cooperate unless given freedom of action. As soon as Edward was granted such freedom, control shifted back to the King and nearly all of the magnates supported him. In an effort to reestablish relations, Edward elected not to punish Warwick and Clarence and in fact is reported to have spoken well of both of them after reestablishing his independence.⁸⁰ While efforts were made through Council meetings to find a joint structure that was acceptable to both the King and Warwick, Edward moved to limit the power of Warwick by reinstating the Percy family as a counter balancing force in the north of England.⁸¹

Finally, in March 1470, disturbances caused by attacks on one of the King's men in Lincolnshire were responded to by the King personally at which time he learned that both Warwick and Clarence had conspired to instigate these disturbances in an effort to draw the King north to Lincolnshire. One contingent of rebels eager to recapture a hostage held by Edward, attacked the King at Eppingham on March 12, 1470, before Warwick and Clarence arrived and were soundly routed to the extent that they left their livery jackets on the field of battle with the badge of Warwick clearly displayed. As a result, the battle, thereafter, has been known as the Battle of "Lose-Coat" Field. In addition, written correspondence captured during the battle confirmed the Warwick-Clarence conspiracy.⁸² Warwick and Clarence immediately thereafter turned and rode south to Devon in order to take ship to the Continent, ideally Calais.

⁷⁹ Oman, p. 190.

⁸⁰ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 279,

⁸¹ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 67.

⁸² Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 285.

The risings in the countryside apparently instigated, and clearly supported, by Warwick had ended in failure and defeat for those who supported Warwick and for Warwick and his protégé, Clarence. What had been Warwick's intentions and what were his motives in supporting a popular revolt against Edward IV?

It seems clear that while Warwick could possibly work with Edward, as demonstrated during late 1469 and early 1470, these two men had fundamental differences of opinion, and arguably, differences in priorities. While working with Edward through the middle of the 1460's, and even earlier in working with Edward's father, Richard, Duke of York, Warwick had become, it can be argued, very accustomed to setting his own course and getting his own way. By birth, wealth and ability, it might also be argued that Warwick believed he was capable of successfully undertaking the job of being King. As mentioned earlier, he was viewed by many as being the "third King" in England in the 1460's (i.e., Henry, Edward and Warwick). It would appear that, given the impasse reached with Edward, Warwick had decided in late 1469 that the best course of action was to replace Edward. The question then became whether to replace Edward with Clarence, Warwick or someone else?⁸³

Did Warwick want to live like, or be viewed as, a King? Yes, I think he did. Did he want to be King of England? I think not because he knew that despite his popularity with the people, he had no colorable claim to the throne as strong as the House of York or Lancaster. As a result, he knew that he lacked any major support for his kingship among the nobles of the realm at the time, many of whom could raise similar claims through the Beaufort line. He also would seem to have understood that without more support among the nobles, the civil war that would ensue and engulf England had very little chance of succeeding and a very great potential of destroying himself and his whole family.

⁸³ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 282.

While Warwick's support for a Lancastrian regime may have been discussed by others with Louis XI in the late 1460's, it seems doubtful going into late 1469 that Warwick was moving forward in support of a grassroots rebellion with the thought of changing dynasties again. The evil "parvenu" about the King had largely been removed by force at Edgecote, the Yorkists regime was reasonably secure and, at the moment, had good relations with most foreign powers. The most logical plan, therefore, for Warwick in 1469 would appear to have been to maintain the Yorkist dynasty, but replace Edward (and his Queen's family) with a king with whom Warwick could work, if not control, either as his mentor or as his father-in-law.⁸⁴

Assuming this was Warwick's intention, were Warwick's motives altruistic or based on personal greed and ambition? To say Warwick's motives in 1469 sprang solely from his desire to serve or benefit the common good would be to ignore where the man had been, what he had done and who he was. That the greatest stability for England would be achieved by maintaining the current dynasty, cannot be doubted and must have been evident to Warwick. That reforms that had been discussed and proposed to remedy the ills of the past Lancastrian regime, which Edward had failed to implement in the first ten years of his reign, could now be implemented by Warwick through Clarence is highly probable. That relations with foreign powers could be maintained on favorable terms to England without having to take sides for or against France, appeared more than likely. Accordingly, that a greater common good might be served by Clarence's accession to the throne seems likely to have been at least a part of Warwick's vision and motivation.⁸⁵ Concurrently, however, it seems certain that Warwick viewed as desirable, if not appropriate, the fact that Clarence's accession while married to

⁸⁴ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 282.

⁸⁵ Gillingham, p. 166; but see, Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 137.

Warwick's daughter, Isabel, would give the Neville family, and Warwick personally, tremendous influence on the policies and actions of the Crown while making them immediate members of the royal family for the foreseeable future. Clearly the recognition of this benefit augmented Warwick's motivation to replace Edward with Clarence. Accordingly, while probably not this time motivated by self-defense, Warwick's incentives for acting in 1469-1470 to foment and support rebellion in the land against Edward and replace him with Clarence were not pure in either direction, but rather, I would suggest, a combination of Neville self interest and the enhanced future peace and prosperity of England.

5. 1470: Decision to Break a Dynasty and Remake a King.

What plans occupied Warwick's mind as he sailed with Clarence and their respective families from Devon up the Channel towards Calais that evening in April 1470? After their outnumbered supporters had been routed by the King at Eppingham ("Lose-Coat Field") the month before, and after having been then labeled traitors by the King, Warwick, Clarence and their wives had just barely made good their escape by ship from England. Initially, Warwick hoped to seize some of his own ships from Southampton before proceeding on to regroup with his loyal forces at Calais, of which Warwick remained Captain, as far as he knew. The attempted seizure of additional ships at Southampton went badly. Lives were lost in the encounter, with nothing to show for the effort. The outlawed group was forced to carry on to Calais with the same 30 small ships with which they had sailed from Devon.⁸⁶

Without more support among their fellow magnates, could the Nevilles and Clarence successfully counter attack and reinvade England? Should they seek refuge in Ireland, where Clarence was Lieutenant, or proceed to France? Support in money and arms would be crucial, with the most likely source being Louis XI, King of France, a man with whom Earl Richard

⁸⁶ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 145; Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 286; Kendall, pp. 295-296.

had been negotiating these past four years and who appeared to have great respect for Warwick. Existing support in England for King Edward, and more importantly for the House of York, seemed solid among the nobles. Was there any real chance of convincing these supporters, or other Yorkists, that Edward was a bastard and that Clarence should be King? Would Clarence be willing to label his mother, the Duchess of York and Neville's aunt, a whore? Would Louis support a coup d'etat within the House of York? Would he support Clarence in that effort? It would seem that these, and other serious questions concerning any plan to use Clarence as a replacement for Edward and to maintain the House of York on the throne, must have been running through Warwick's mind as the Channel slid beneath his keel on final approach to Calais.

Then more bad news was presented. Their attempt to enter the port of Calais was rejected by Lord Duras, the acting Marshal of Calais. Duras reported to Warwick that he had been ordered by the King to deny Warwick access to Calais and that he felt compelled to obey the King's command. Denied access to his historically safe stronghold and, more importantly, to the forces within, Warwick proceeded north continuing to take prizes in the Channel, and finally entering the Seine estuary on May 1, 1470 with about 80 ships, landing in Normandy at Honfleur and Harfleur. For the next two months while Warwick parlayed with Louis, he continued to raid shipping in the Channel, collecting arms and prizes for use in his future efforts, and further alienating, among others, the Duke of Burgundy, Edward IV's ally. This was soon curtailed by the presence of an Anglo-Burgundian fleet blockading the Seine estuary.

What were Warwick's options? What were his intentions? He could do nothing and possibly remain in France as counselor and mercenary to Louis. He could attempt to replace Edward with Clarence on the pretense that Edward was not the legitimate heir of Richard,

Duke of York, thus replacing one usurper with another. Warwick could return to the House of Lancaster as a “prodigal son” and somehow seek to depose Edward and the House of York, leading to the readeption or restoration of Henry VI to the throne of England. Staying in France was apparently not an option, but either of his other options required military and financial backing from an outside source, especially since he had been denied access to his troops at Calais. As suggested, Louis of France offered the most likely source of such assistance, but the question then became which option offered the greatest benefit and the best chance of success in Louis’ mind.

It very soon became clear in Warwick’s discussions with Louis that Louis was not interested in Clarence, or any other Yorkists, holding the throne of England. He wanted an ally to join with him in a war against Burgundy and Brittany. In light of Edward’s alliance with Burgundy and the marriage of his sister, Margaret, to the new Duke Charles of Burgundy, it seemed clear, at least arguably in Louis’ mind, that the House of York had to go altogether. That Louis and Warwick had reached an agreement at this point is strongly evidenced by Warwick’s continued raiding of Burgundian shipping from his Normandy bases, which arguably had the desired effect of not only driving Burgundy and the Yorkist Court into a closer alliance, but also alienating both powers against France at a time when all three countries were at peace with each other. Accordingly, Louis proposed a plan that would put the Lancastrian regime, in the person of Henry VI, back on the throne of England with Margaret of Anjou as his Queen and the young Edward, Prince of Wales, now almost 18, as the presumptive heir to the throne.⁸⁷ Warwick would initially serve as the King’s Lieutenant with England to be ruled in the King’s name by a Council, on which Margaret, the young

⁸⁷ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 292-296; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 69-70; Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, p. 85; Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 147; Griffiths, pp. 890-891.

Prince Edward, and Warwick would serve with other loyal Lancastrians. Apparently, Louis' assumption was that Warwick would then be in a position, at least temporarily, to control the events and the activities of England after the restoration of Henry VI.

Most troubling to Warwick, however, was the fact that the plan would require a reconciliation between Warwick and Margaret and an agreement by them to cause England to declare war with Louis on Burgundy in a joint effort to dismember the Burgundian state. As consideration for Warwick's active participation and endorsement of this plan, Louis is said to have previously made allusions to a special prize for Warwick's active assistance. Finally, in July, 1470, Louis formally offered Warwick the regions of Zeeland and Holland as his personal domain upon the successful conclusion of the war with Burgundy.⁸⁸

While one can imagine that Warwick, who saw himself as an equal of kings, might be attracted by the possibility of his own domain on the North Sea and a major role in the governance of England, was it enough to bring him to his knees before Margaret, the French witch whom he loathed so mightily at Court and whom he had sought on more than one occasion to kill on the battlefield? Would Margaret agree to any power sharing or joint effort with the man she viewed as solely responsible for the disinheriting of her son, and more recently, the deposition of her husband as King? One would expect both individuals to recoil violently at such a proposal and they did. Only after weeks of clever diplomacy and self serving logic presented to each party was Louis able to gain the acceptance of Warwick and Margaret in June/July of 1470 to their respective roles and contributions to the plan. The final elements included Margaret's agreement to the marriage of her son, Edward, Prince of Wales (age 16) to Warwick's younger daughter, Anne (age 17), and Warwick's agreement to proceed with Clarence to invade England, while the remainder of the assembled forces,

⁸⁸ Kendall, pp. 346-347; Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 158; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 72.

Margaret and Edward waited to cross the Channel until it was confirmed that Henry had been placed back on the throne.

On July 25, 1470, in the cathedral at Angers in the Loire Valley of France, the unimaginable occurred. Warwick went on bended knee before Margaret and begged her forgiveness for his many “past transgressions.” He pledged his loyalty to Henry, Margaret, his Queen, and the House of Lancaster and agreed to take all steps necessary with her assistance and that of Louis to place Henry VI back on the throne of England. Accordingly, Margaret granted her forgiveness and accepted his pledge of loyalty and action.⁸⁹

It would seem that after witnessing all of this Clarence must have been very insecure about his future position in England and about his continued life.⁹⁰ His brother, Edward IV, would, it was anticipated, have an heir (Elizabeth was then seven months pregnant). He had just seen his mentor and father-in-law, Warwick, pledge his loyalty to the arch enemy of the House of York and agree to put the recently deposed King, Henry VI, who also had a healthy heir, back on the throne. What was left for Clarence? Lieutenancy of Ireland? The Tower? The block? His best future probably lay with his brother, Edward, and the House of York, but how could he get there? While secret communications were apparently ongoing between Clarence and Edward, the plans for the invasion of England and the Readeption of Henry VI were proceeding. By September, 1470 all was in order.

While Edward was away from London in the north putting down more Neville inspired risings that commenced in August of 1470, Warwick and Clarence with several thousand mercenaries and formerly exiled Lancastrians landed in Devon on September 13, 1470. Only three weeks later, on October 3, 1470, due to Warwick’s immense popularity

⁸⁹ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 147; Carpenter, p. 177; Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 292-296; Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 68-69; Oman, pp. 201-204.

⁹⁰ Oman, pp. 204-205.

with the gentry and commons, the support of many loyal Lancastrians who had, in secret, continued to hope for the reinstatement of the deposed and imprisoned King Henry, and Edward's own miserable failure to effectively remedy the problems of the prior regime, Warwick and his army were joyously admitted to London. Having arranged for his release from the Tower, Warwick then had Henry recrowned as Henry VI, King of England, on October 6, 1470. As agreed, with Warwick as the King's Lieutenant, a interim government was formed pending the arrival of the Queen, the Prince Edward and the other Lancastrian nobles.

Edward, surprised by the invasion and faced with critical defections, left England on September 29, 1470 for the Netherlands with the new Earl Rivers, Edward's youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester (the future Richard III) and Lord Hastings. Edward's wife, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, sought sanctuary in Westminster Abbey in order to have their child, the future Edward V. The Lancastrian-French alliance, Warwick's pledge to go to war with Burgundy, and the Duke of Burgundy's marriage to the King's sister, forced the otherwise ambivalent Burgundian Duke to give his support to Edward and the House of York. If nothing else, Duke Charles hoped that this support would break up the Lancastrian-French alliance by unseating the House of Lancaster and destroying Warwick.

While Edward prepared his own invasion of England, Warwick was confronted with many difficulties, including dealing with the very difficult redistribution of estates taken from Yorkists, who had previously supported him during his efforts on behalf of the House of York, to those returning Lancastrians, who had been stripped of their lands in 1461 as a result of the deposition of Henry VI by Edward. The political and personal balancing act required of Warwick as the defacto King, together with Louis demands that England take to the field against Burgundy as agreed, turned the autumn and winter of 1470-71 into a living hell of

recriminations and conflict that precluded any progress by Warwick in reforming the Lancastrian government.⁹¹

In March 1471, with Margaret and the rest of the Lancastrians still in France, Edward landed at Ravenspur on the central east coast of England with three ships and 1,000 men, claiming that he had returned solely to reclaim his duchy of York. While few followed Edward, no one actually opposed him.⁹² The nobility was caught between the conflicting forces of two powerful regimes. Everyone wanted to be on the winning side, consequently many seemed to equivocate, waiting to see what would transpire when the Queen landed. Clarence likewise,⁹³ as mentioned previously, had good reason to vacillate about his allegiance. On April 3, 1471, Edward took the initiative and intercepted Clarence near Banbury and the brothers were reconciled, Edward needing Clarence's military support and Clarence having no where else to go with any future.⁹⁴

Turning their combined forces against Warwick, Edward and Clarence confronted him at Coventry where Warwick was holding that city. Warwick, ever cautious, waited for reinforcements even though at the time he had superior numbers and fire power. Unable to bring Warwick out to fight in the open and not able to lay siege to Coventry, nor wanting to, Edward abandoned Coventry and raced to London on hearing that the Dukes of Somerset and Devon had deserted the City in anticipation of joining up with Queen Margaret upon her landing on the South coast. London was unable to resist Edward, and granted him access on April 11, 1471. Edward promptly secured Henry VI and Warwick's brother, George Neville, Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England, in the Tower and turned to confront Warwick's new Lancastrian army.

⁹¹ Hicks, *Warwick*, pp. 301-303.

⁹² Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 72-73; Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 163-164.

⁹³ Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 303; Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 153-158.

⁹⁴ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 73.

In a display of exceptionally poor military tactics, Warwick, again with superior forces, confronted Edward at Barnet, north of London, just before dawn. The battle was over in three hours, with the Lancastrians being soundly defeated. Warwick and his brother, John Neville, Marques of Montagu were killed and, as described at the outset, were stripped of their armor on the battlefield, transported to London and laid naked in a single coffin in front of St Paul's Cathedral for three days.

In discussing the first four decision points outlined in this paper, I have concluded and provided support for the proposition that in each of those cases, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, acted rationally and either in legitimate defense of his own family, or for the common good of the people of England, or, at worst, a combination of such motives. In this fifth and final instance, I believe Warwick took a very different course and for very different motives.

It was neither rational nor logical to believe that a pledge of allegiance to the House of Lancaster or any forgiveness by Queen Margaret of Anjou would provide Warwick with any real power or personal security in England. Regardless of what was said at Angers, there was no reason to expect Margaret to allow Warwick to control or influence her husband, Henry, or later her son, Edward in any way. Clearly, Margaret believed that this was solely her prerogative. Even if the rule by Council was maintained during Henry's life, Warwick would have to have known that Margaret would have seen to his marginalization, if not his elimination, by one means or another. Warwick would spend the rest of his life looking over his shoulder wondering from which direction Margaret would next attack. Young Edward, closely mentored by his mother, would, most likely, be no different. Why then would Warwick have agreed to this proposal?

I would suggest that Warwick had finally decided to act exclusively in his own best interest. He had always wanted to be a Duke, but saw that it was a title reserved for immediate members of the Royal Family. Warwick saw himself, as many contemporaries had observed, as a “third King” in England in the 1460’s.⁹⁵ Warwick was treated as the equivalent of a Prince of State, and as such, appears to have found it both stimulating and satisfying to act independently of the English Crown in both foreign and domestic affairs. I believe that Warwick saw it as a distinct possibility that his influence over affairs in England would be quickly, if not immediately, silenced soon after Henry was secure on the Throne with Margaret at his side. Assuming that the outcome of the conflict with Burgundy was successfully resolved in favor of the Anglo-French alliance, Warwick would nevertheless receive from Louis as his personal domain and “realm” the territories of Zeeland and Holland, which comprised a country about one-third the size of Yorkshire, holding a dominant trade position on the west side of the North Sea. Accordingly, I would suggest that when Warwick recognized that such marginalization was a more than likely outcome, and was confronted on the other hand with the specter of being tried, convicted and executed as a traitor if the invasion of England went badly, Warwick, being ever cautious, made his Faustian “deal with the devil” in the person of Louis. Warwick sold his soul for Zeeland and Holland. By so doing, regardless of how things went after the Readeption of Henry and the defeat of Burgundy, he would have a safe haven and a kingdom to rule suitable, in his view, for a noble of his stature.

It was at this point, with the decision to kneel before Margaret and restore the House of Lancaster in exchange for promise of Zeeland and Holland, that Warwick became obsessed solely with what was best for him and not necessarily best for England. At no other point in

⁹⁵ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 74, citing the Flemish chronicler, de But.

his life does it appear that Warwick was so completely self motivated. For no other reason would he have consented to kneel before the one person who represented all that he and his father had fought against for the preceding 25 years. It was at this point that Warwick's career became, as Professor Paul Murray Kendall describes, "... a gigantic failure, not so much because he reached higher than he was able to grasp, but because he poisoned his character in the course of reaching – sold what he was for what he thought he ought to be."⁹⁶

Conclusions.

What conclusions and evaluations of Warwick can we draw after reviewing his life and his decisions during the critical 18 years of 1453 to 1471?

Was Warwick a kingmaker? Certainly by reputation among his contemporaries in both England and on the Continent, he was considered so with respect to the Yorkist dynasty and the accession of Edward IV. As we have seen, however, both Warwick's opposition to the Duke of York's attempted deposition of Henry VI in 1460 and the exceptional dynamism of Edward, Earl of March, after the battle of Mortimer's Cross in 1461, suggest that Warwick may have been a willing and necessary supporter, but perhaps not an aggressive installer of kings as this title would suggest. That he took a more active and aggressive role in the redeption of Henry VI and the House of Lancaster is true, but perhaps his motivations were oriented more toward removing Edward IV from the throne, then toward putting Henry on the throne, since Edward was the man who had embarrassed and affronted Warwick as well as stripping Warwick of most of his power. Clearly, Warwick's first choice was to attempt to control Edward and rule through him, with his alternative plan being the replacement of Edward with his brother, Clarence, while continuing to maintain the House of York in power. When neither of these alternatives worked, Warwick, some argue, realized the error of his

⁹⁶ Kendall, p. 12.

original decision to support the House of York and made an effort to undo what he had done by putting the House of Lancaster back on the throne.

While this suggestion has some appeal, there is certainly room to suggest that perhaps Warwick's plans in 1471, with respect to this third alternative, were not as altruistic as some may have thought. While Richard Neville clearly sought vigorously to unseat Edward IV as King in 1470, his "making" or readeption of Henry VI does not appear to have been motivated, to any great extent, by any affection for Henry VI or a belief in the future of the Lancastrian dynasty. Warwick, as I have suggested, in considering the proposed support for the House of Lancaster would have had some serious concerns about his future position in a government controlled by that dynasty, the continued security of his present landholdings and wealth, and literally his own personal survivability. He, therefore, may have been pragmatically induced to put Henry VI back on the throne based upon assurances from Louis XI that he could come through the ordeal with the prospect of real success, regardless of his continued relations with the House of Lancaster. Accordingly, I would suggest that Warwick's "king breaking" efforts were both marginally successful and short lived, while his title as "king maker" appears to be perhaps overstated with respect to the coronation of Edward IV, and, with respect to the readeption of Henry VI, apparently not motivated solely by a loyalty or love of "king and country."

More than whether these titles constitute accurate descriptions of the man, their use by English historians and observers, as early as the 16th Century, suggest more directly the opinion that Warwick's contemporaries had of him both as a hero and as a villain. It would seem that Warwick's documented immense popularity with the commons and gentry of England was personal in nature and was not tied to either the House of York or the House of Lancaster. His enormous landholdings and wealth by the 1460's, when combined with his

immense popularity among the people, certainly would appear to have given Warwick a freedom of action and an opinion of himself that would have pulled heavily for both thought and action independent of any Crown. Certainly, it seems, such thought and action were undertaken with the best interests of the English people in mind, but apparently not without regard for the interests of Warwick and the Nevilles. For this reason, I think it can be concluded that a vast majority of the English people and, by reputation, many observers on the Continent, considered Warwick a hero, a model knight, if not a modern version of Lancelot as described in Mallory's *Morte d' Arthur*, first published in London in 1470.⁹⁷ It would seem that Warwick did not believe himself indebted to either the House of York or the House of Lancaster, nor did the people. In fact, as Professor Pollard has argued, he may very well have believed that these dynasties were in fact indebted to him.⁹⁸ It would seem that his loyal followers and retainers perceived him to be aspiring to the higher calling of the chivalric code of the day, attempting to do right solely for the sake of doing right. As a great magnate, he was expected to do great things, including protecting the King from greedy and avaricious counselors and protecting the people from a tyrannical King. This is precisely what the people perceived him to be doing and is why they apparently continued to perceive him as a great man and a hero in his time.

By contrast, those individuals who were controlled by, or beholden to, the ruling dynasty, must have seen Warwick as a usurper, an "over-mighty" subject, who put himself above the Crown, and a true villain of the realm. Certainly Warwick's popularity and his self-perception as an independent magnate, who felt comfortable challenging the throne, must have been a concern to Edward IV and were probably perceived as real threats by the other

⁹⁷ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 200.

⁹⁸ Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 200.

Yorkist magnates. It was precisely because Warwick's independent spirit was so popular, and might potentially be used by an impersonator or successor, that Edward IV felt compelled, as described at the beginning of this discussion, to display Warwick's dead body and that of his brother in front of St. Paul's Cathedral in London for three full days.⁹⁹ Edward, to the extent possible, needed to convince all current and potential Warwick followers that the great Earl and his brother were, in fact, dead. Edward's magnates and supporters needed to be assured that there could be no impersonator, nor the use of any false rumors to raise hopes of his survival, which might serve as the basis for future challenges to the Yorkist throne.

Accordingly, I would suggest that our evaluation of Warwick as a hero or a villain depends literally on the class of the individual living in the 15th Century to whom the question is posed. Contrary to earlier opinions of Warwick, it does not appear that there would have been a universal evaluation that he was all good or all bad, all hero or all villain. The foregoing examination of these five critical decisions in his later life, would appear to support this conclusion in that he was not only perceived differently by different classes in society, but also by the fact that Warwick himself and his motives appear to have changed between 1450 and 1471. He appears to be a man in transition, initially effecting change and outcomes that were noble, but later turning in incremental degrees to self interest, personal power and wealth as his basic motivations. Perhaps he flew too close to the sun like Icarus, perhaps absolute power does corrupt absolutely, or perhaps, in the human condition, some things do not change.

While the questions we have posed would appear to have supportable answers, that support depends upon a willingness to perceive the man, Richard Neville, through the eyes of his contemporaries in the 15th Century. More importantly, this effort to view Warwick

⁹⁹ Gillingham, p. 201; Kendall, p. 267; Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 168; Pollard, *Warwick*, p. 73.

through contemporary eyes offers us a more objective glimpse of this man and what he was able to accomplish. The image that appears through these contemporary lenses suggests a man who was exceptionally energetic and a true charismatic leader of men, who, with these abilities, directly and dynamically influenced the politics of England during the final 17 years of his life. Thereafter, as mentioned before, his reputation and the memory of both what he was able to do and what he attempted to do, directly impacted, and potentially inspired, the policies and attitudes of the Crown of England for the ensuing two centuries. Finally, the ability, popularity and accomplishments of this man, as seen through these contemporary lenses, more importantly to this writer, continues to this day to serve as a lightning rod for challenging historical debates concerning the people and events in England during the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries.

Politics and A Politician in Late Medieval England; Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury:

Kingmaker or Kingbreaker; Hero or Villain

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