

GENDERING THE LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN WORLD



Kit Heyam

The Reputation of Edward II, 1305-1697

A Literary Transformation of History

Amsterdam
University
Press

A
U
P

Amsterdam
University
Press

The Reputation of Edward II,
1305–1697



Amsterdam
University
Press

Gendering the Late Medieval and Early Modern World

Series editors: James Daybell (Chair), Victoria E. Burke, Svante Norrhem, and Merry Wiesner-Hanks

This series provides a forum for studies that investigate women, gender, and/or sexuality in the late medieval and early modern world. The editors invite proposals for book-length studies of an interdisciplinary nature, including, but not exclusively, from the fields of history, literature, art and architectural history, and visual and material culture. Consideration will be given to both monographs and collections of essays. Chronologically, we welcome studies that look at the period between 1400 and 1700, with a focus on any part of the world, as well as comparative and global works. We invite proposals including, but not limited to, the following broad themes: methodologies, theories and meanings of gender; gender, power and political culture; monarchs, courts and power; constructions of femininity and masculinity; gift-giving, diplomacy and the politics of exchange; gender and the politics of early modern archives; gender and architectural spaces (courts, salons, household); consumption and material culture; objects and gendered power; women's writing; gendered patronage and power; gendered activities, behaviours, rituals and fashions.



Amsterdam
University
Press

The Reputation of Edward II, 1305–1697

A Literary Transformation of History

Kit Heyam

Amsterdam University Press



Amsterdam
University
Press

Cover illustration: *King Edward II* by F.F., after Unknown artist, etching, 17th century. NPG D33895 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6372 933 8

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 214 6

DOI 10.5117/9789463729338

NUR 685

© K. Heyam / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2020

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.



Amsterdam
University
Press

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	9
1 Riot, Sodomy, and Minions The Ambiguous Discourse of Sexual Transgression	35
2 From Goats to Ganymedes The Development of Edward II's Sexual Reputation	69
3 Edward II and Piers Gaveston Brothers, Friends, Lovers	101
4 'Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?' Edward II's Agency and Culpability	137
5 Edward II as Political Exemplum	177
6 'No escape now from a life full of suffering' Edward II's Sensational Fall	215
7 Beyond Sexual Mimesis The Penetrative Murder of Edward II	241
Conclusion: The Literary Transformation of History	277
Appendix: Accounts of and allusions to Edward II's reign, composed 1305–1697	287
Index	343





Amsterdam
University
Press

Acknowledgements

The writing of this book – something which has been academically, emotionally and politically important to me – could not have happened without the support and hard work of a great many wonderful people. Thanks and gratitude are due to a few in particular: Paul Hammond; Helen Cooper and Catherine Batt; James Daybell; Richard Thomason; and a series of past teachers and tutors to whom I owe an enormous amount, Lynne Kay, Jeannie Holt, Liz Draper, Louise Joy, David Clifford, Hero Chalmers and Raphael Lyne. Thanks also to the wonderfully supportive and encouraging Erika Gaffney at Amsterdam University Press, and to the anonymous reviewers whose feedback on an earlier version of this book was enormously helpful in shaping and strengthening what I wanted to (explicitly and implicitly) say.

More personally, to my family: thank you for not throwing the books out of the window when I demanded to be read to for the hundredth time as a toddler, for supporting me in doing this even when you thought it was weird/a terrible idea, and for mostly understanding what it was about. To my friends: thank you for your love and support while I (somehow) completed this book during a period of personal and political upheaval, and particular thanks to Blake Gutt, Eddie Demelza Tindall, Hannah Coates, Helen Kingstone, Izzy Jayasinghe, and Ynda Jas. To my activist communities in York, Leeds and beyond, and especially the past and present committees of York LGBT History Month: thank you for being the space I needed to work out why this project was so important to me, and for helping me to develop the confidence to fight for that. To all the people – past, present, and future – who inspired and continue to inspire that activism: thanks, love and solidarity.

And to my husband Alex: thank you for the love, patience, kindness, inspiration, encouragement and cups of tea you gave me throughout the long process that shaped this book – and for, in the widest sense, *always* understanding what it was about.





Amsterdam
University
Press

Introduction

Abstract

This introduction discusses the reputation of King Edward II (1307–1327) in medieval and early modern England, and the implications of this reputation beyond its immediate relevance to scholars of Edward II's reign and afterlife: as a case study for the history of sex and the changing vocabulary of sexual transgression; as a source of positive depictions of love between men; as a paradigmatic exemplum for discussions of favouritism and deposition, and thereby a case study providing insight into the early modern use of medieval history; as a means of developing our understanding of literary texts such as Marlowe's *Edward II*; and as a process that illuminates the literary nature of medieval and early modern historical narratives.

Keywords: Chronicles, early modern, medieval, historiography, homosexuality, sexuality

What do you think you know about Edward II? This unfortunate English King is mainly remembered today for his relationships with his male favourites, celebrated or censured for their queer potential; and for his supposed murder with a red-hot poker, assumed by many to have been real or imagined retribution for his sexual behaviour. This modern reputation strikingly preserves the salient facts about Edward as highlighted by the writers of medieval and early modern England. During the four centuries after Edward's death in 1327, a historiographical consensus developed that Edward's relationships with his male favourites, particularly Piers Gaveston and the younger Hugh Despenser, were sexual and romantic; and that he was murdered by anal penetration with a red-hot spit. Despite the numerous other notable aspects of Edward's narrative in medieval and early modern accounts – not least his disastrous military efforts against Scotland – it was these details which persisted in even the shortest early accounts of his reign; and it is these aspects of his reputation, moreover, which have attracted a

Heyam, K., *The Reputation of Edward II, 1305–1697: A Literary Transformation of History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020

DOI: 10.5117/9789463729338_INTRO



Amsterdam
University
Press

disproportionate amount of scrutiny from literary critics and historians alike.¹ This book is the first attempt to trace, and to account for, the process by which this reputation developed in medieval and early modern England.

The case of Edward II's reputation has important implications beyond its immediate relevance to scholars of his reign and afterlife. As the English monarch with by far the most substantial reputation for same-sex love, desire and activity – in medieval, early modern, and modern texts – Edward is a valuable case study for the history of sex in England. The accumulation of stories around him provides one of the clearest and richest examples of the processes and priorities that shaped narratives of sexual transgression in this period; and it provides a detailed insight into the abundance of sexual discourse in English, Latin and French, and the ways in which this shifted from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. Moreover, the existence of so many detailed accounts of his reign allows us to observe that approaches to Edward's relationships with men were far from wholly condemnatory. Thorough attention to texts across genres reveals a nuanced distinction between same-sex love and same-sex desire – the former associated with classical ideals of friendship and used as a source of sympathy and pathos, the latter condemned as sinful indulgence alongside other kinds of sexual and bodily transgressions – which complicates teleological narratives of steadily increasing liberalisation in attitudes towards same-sex relationships.

Beyond the history of sex, attention to early modern narratives of Edward's reign also demonstrates his enduring relevance as a political exemplum. As the first English King to be deposed, the study of his reputation provides a means to build on Simon Walker's insights into the collective memory of Richard II's reign and the ways in which the process of memory and memorialisation helped to construct subsequent ideas of kingship, extending this analysis to think about the use of memories of medieval history more broadly.² Like Richard II, by the sixteenth century Edward had taken on a paradigmatic function as a locus of discussions around deposition and overmighty favourites: narratives of his reign therefore illuminate political discussions surrounding Elizabeth I, James VI and I, Charles I and James II, as well as into the early modern 'use' of medieval history.

One aspect of that 'use', of course, was literary. Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* is central to the process of reputation-building that this book

1 See Phillips, 'Introduction', for a representative sample of the diverse historiographical considerations that Edward's reign has attracted. For a summary of historiographical treatments of Edward's sexual behaviour, see Burgtof, 'With My Life', pp. 33–36.

2 Walker, 'Remembering Richard'.



traces; and importantly, Marlowe appears in this account not simply as an absorber and refiner of chronicle sources. *Edward II*, as the first text to explicitly present Edward's relationships with his male favourites as sexual and romantic, exerted a significant impact on the direction and focus of future narratives of his reign. This book provides a reassessment of the play's significance and impact in light of that, responding to Judith Haber's recent call 'to consider afresh how *Edward II* brings together "sexuality" and "history"'.³ In addition, it uses new readings of Marlowe's sources (and the sources of those sources) to illuminate our understanding of the play's emotional structure and its critically contentious murder scene.

In its attention to drama, poetry, chronicles and political pamphlets alike – and in my focus on the language, form and narrative structure of these sources – this book is deliberately transdisciplinary. This is not simply because a literary-historical approach can facilitate a more comprehensive assessment of how Edward II's reputation developed, and what the study of it can illuminate: it is because the case of Edward's reputation reveals the significant impact of literary texts and techniques on the construction of historical narratives, and the value of close reading (applied to texts of all genres) for accurately and specifically elucidating the ways that medieval and early modern writers conceptualised sex and history. I hope, therefore, that scholars of medieval and early modern literature and history might also be prompted by this study to think afresh about the ways we understand genre and methodology; to blur the boundaries between literature and history, both in the way we identify our sources and in the ways we read them.

Life of an 'unfortunate king'

Edward II was born at Caernarfon on 25 April 1284, the youngest child (but only surviving son) of King Edward I and his wife Eleanor of Castile. In 1300, the Gascon-born squire Piers Gaveston joined Edward's household, and the two became close. Gaveston first becomes prevalent in historiographical accounts of Edward's life in 1305, when Edward quarrelled with his father's treasurer, Walter Langton. The quarrel certainly concerned money, but some accounts also accuse the young Edward and Gaveston of having broken into one of Langton's deer parks; in any case, Edward I sided with his treasurer and temporarily banished his son from the court. He also temporarily banished Gaveston and another young noble, Gilbert de Clare, from his

3 Haber, 'State of the Art', p. 96.



son's household – thus initiating a pattern whereby Edward's bad behaviour was repeatedly blamed on Gaveston's influence. Despite a reconciliation between Edward and his father shortly afterwards, the Prince's excessive favouritism towards Gaveston clearly continued to cause Edward I some concern, and he sent Gaveston into exile in February 1307. Less than five months later, however, Edward I was dead.

Edward II received the homage of England's lords on 20 July 1307, and was crowned in March 1308, having married Isabella, daughter of Philippe IV of France, in January of that year. Contemporaneous accounts of his reign agree that one of his first acts on acceding to the throne was to recall Gaveston from exile and to grant him the earldom of Cornwall. The elevation of this minor noble to an office 'closely associated with the crown' caused Edward's other nobles some concern; this was sharply exacerbated by Edward's decision to appoint Gaveston as regent of England during his voyage to France to marry Isabella, by other displays of favouritism at Edward's coronation, and by Gaveston's haughty behaviour in his new position.⁴ In April 1308, Edward's nobles demanded that Gaveston be exiled. Edward agreed, but made Gaveston his lieutenant in Ireland, a privileged position which undermined the nobles' intentions. Following Edward's recall of Gaveston in 1309; a further exile (on which tighter conditions were imposed, resulting in Gaveston fleeing to Flanders) in 1311; and a subsequent return early in 1312 around the time when Gaveston's wife Margaret was due to give birth, Gaveston was captured and executed in June 1312.

Gaveston's execution caused a rift between Edward and his nobles – particularly his cousin Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, and Guy, Earl of Warwick, whose leadership had been primarily responsible for his capture and execution. Despite various uneasy attempts at reconciliation, the conflict between Edward and Lancaster was again exacerbated by Edward's excessive promotion of and favouritism towards two men, a father and son both named Hugh Despenser. Like Gaveston, the Despensers were considered insufficiently high-born to justify their influence over Edward and his patronage, or to excuse their proud, apparently often obnoxious behaviour. Their continuing influence led, in 1321, to civil war. Initially a group led by Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, attacked the Despensers' lands in the Welsh marches; in July 1321 the father and son were forced into exile. In January 1322, however, Edward announced the annulment of their exile; following this and a series of failed attempts at reconciliation, the conflict between King and nobles escalated. Finally, at the battle of Boroughbridge

4 Phillips, *Edward II*, p. 122.



on 16th March 1322, de Bohun was killed and Lancaster captured. Shocking contemporary commentators, Edward subsequently executed him, along with 27 other nobles.

Although Edward had apparently gained control over his nobles, the remaining years of his reign were marked by widespread discontent at the Despencers' influence both at court and in the Welsh marches. In March 1325, Edward sent his wife Isabella to France to negotiate with her brother, now King Charles IV, over conflict in Gascony; in September she was joined by their son, the twelve-year-old Prince Edward. Isabella refused to return to the English court while the Despencers remained dominant. While in France, she developed alliances with Roger Mortimer of Wigmore (who had been imprisoned by Edward after the battle of Boroughbridge, but escaped in 1323) and with John, Count of Hainault. In September 1326, they invaded England. Edward fled with his favourites – initially to Lundy Island, then to Wales – but was captured in November 1326 and deposed (or forced to abdicate) in favour of his son; the Despencers and Edward's other favourites were executed. The deposed Edward was initially imprisoned at Kenilworth Castle, then moved to Berkeley in Gloucestershire, where he died on 21 September 1327.

Writing Edward II's narrative

This summary of Edward II's life is a partial one, foregrounding the influence of his favourites above other military and political events.⁵ Its partiality, however, accurately represents the preoccupations of modern scholars and premodern commentators alike. Hundreds of accounts of Edward II's life and reign – in chronicles, poetry, drama, novelistic prose narrative and political pamphlets – were written during the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Together, these accounts shaped and reshaped Edward's reputation, and deployed him as a political exemplum in relation to contemporary issues from Elizabethan favouritism to the Jacobean Exclusion Crisis. Their focuses vary, but the overwhelming majority agree on a small number of details fundamental to Edward's reign. His relationships with Gaveston and the Despencers are recounted at length, far more so than those with other favourites such as Robert Baldock, and are (unlike those other relationships) characterized by excessive intimacy and by the favourites' undue influence over political matters. His highly

5 For a fuller overview, see Phillips, 'Edward II [Edward of Caernarfon] (1284–1327)'.

emotional deposition is followed by imprisonment and mistreatment sometimes amounting to torture, and by a murder which is quickly established as anally penetrative, painful, and undetectable on the body. The centrality of these details reflects the fact that medieval and early modern accounts of Edward's reign overwhelmingly prioritise the sensational, exciting, and emotionally compelling aspects of his narrative – in other words, the aspects that are most conducive to enjoyable reading – as well as (or, often, at the expense of) those conducive to factual accuracy.⁶ While Chris Given-Wilson has shown that chroniclers remained aware of their audience in terms of their language and chronology, I argue here that they (and other writers of historical accounts) more substantially centred and prioritised their readers' engagement.⁷ The case of Edward II's reputation reveals the literary nature of medieval and early modern history-writing, and the need to be thoughtful about generic categories when considering the priorities of writers from these periods.

Many of these narratives of Edward's reign are short chronicles which are now little read.⁸ These texts, many of which were popular enough to go through multiple editions, are often very derivative of the longer chronicles which have attracted more attention from modern scholars. As such, they provide an important insight into the way in which those longer texts were read by early modern readers – for the writers of short chronicles were readers too. Their texts suggest which details of historical figures were considered most important to preserve in short accounts, and can sometimes reveal how the more ambiguous sections of longer texts were interpreted by these readers who became writers; additionally, they show evidence of intertextual influence from multiple genres, particularly the impact of Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II*. Owing to their popularity, they also provide insight into 'popular opinion' of the past.⁹ Reading them has been an essential stage in reconstructing a sense of the multiplicitous nature of the reputations of historical figures in medieval and early modern England. In

6 On the importance of accuracy to medieval chroniclers, see Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 1–20.

7 Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, pp. 151–152.

8 On early modern English 'epitome culture', attitudes towards these short chronicles, and the ways in which their construction made use of humanist scholarly strategy, see Wheatley, *Epic, Epitome, and the Early Modern Historical Imagination*, pp. 9–38.

9 Metzger, 'Controversy and "Correctness"', p. 438; see also Beer, 'English History Abridged', pp. 1–14, 26; Wheatley, *Epic, Epitome, and the Early Modern Historical Imagination*, pp. 40–41; Woolf, 'Genre into Artifact', pp. 344–347. See Woolf's entire article for the reasons behind the popularity and ultimate decline of these texts. On this, and the reading practices with which early modern people engaged with chronicles, see also Woolf, *Reading History*.



recognition of how challenging readers may find it to keep track of these sources – and of the additional confusion resulting from the inconsistent nomenclature of many medieval texts – the book is accompanied by an appendix table, ‘Accounts of and allusions to Edward II’s reign, composed 1305–1697’. This table provides a guide to the accounts of Edward’s reign cited in this book, and to other accounts consulted but not quoted. It summarizes their date of composition; textual history and alternative titles; sources and influentiality; and a brief summary of their significance in relation to this study. Since the book cites a large number of primary sources, the Appendix is intended as a quick reference for these details: it provides an alternative to reminding the reader of each source’s significance and textual history every time a quotation from it is used, which would prove intrusive and repetitious. I hope it will also provide a useful resource for future scholars of Edward II’s historiographical reputation and/or of the texts that comprise it.

Reading Edward II’s narrative

Alongside the medieval and early modern readers who digested and developed accounts of Edward’s reign and produced new ones, this book is interested too in modern readers: the historians and literary critics who have used these narratives, and the methodologies and perspectives they have brought. Medieval historians, in particular, have hitherto approached the early texts this book discusses as potential sources of factual information about Edward’s sexual behaviour and/or about popular opinion of it during or after his reign. While nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians initially saw Edward’s reign primarily in terms of its importance for constitutional developments, John Boswell’s description of Edward as ‘the last overtly homosexual monarch of the Middle Ages’ in his seminal 1980 book *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* solidified Edward’s sexual behaviour as a historiographical preoccupation (as W.M. Ormrod points out), and cemented his place in a queer historical lineage in popular imagination.¹⁰ Boswell offered a partial assessment of fourteenth-century chronicle sources on the basis of their contemporary popularity and their closeness in date to Edward’s reign, remaining unequivocal in his conclusions about Edward’s sexual behaviour. Following this, in his 1988 biography of

¹⁰ Boswell, *Christianity*, p. 298; Ormrod, ‘Sexualities’, p. 23. For constitutional histories of Edward’s reign, see, for example, Tout, *Place of the Reign of Edward II*; Maddicott, *Lancaster*; Davies, *Baronial Opposition*.



Piers Gaveston, J.S. Hamilton used fourteenth-century chronicles to resituate Gaveston as a central figure in Edward's political and personal actions, rehabilitating him from what he saw as the marginalisation imposed by constitutional historians like William Stubbs, T.F. Tout and J. Conway Davies, and concluding that 'there is no question that the king and his favourite were lovers'.¹¹ Pierre Chaplais, writing six years later, built on Hamilton's centring of Gaveston but used the same sources to argue for a relationship of sworn brotherhood, rather than a romantic and sexual one.¹² Jochen Burgtof, in a 2000 essay, provided a valuable synthesis of historiographical approaches to Edward and Gaveston's relationship, and – arguing that 'Apart from the charter evidence which sheds some light on the two men's relationship, it is fourteenth-century historical writing which offers the most insights' – offered fresh translations of much of the ambiguous Latin vocabulary used to refer to this relationship in contemporary chronicles, suggesting that it should not be interpreted as denoting sexual desire or romantic love.¹³ J.R.S. Phillips, in the fullest and most recent scholarly biography of Edward, takes a similar approach: his discussion of Edward's sexual behaviour reads contemporary chronicles alongside other documentary evidence to establish a factual narrative, evaluating sources on the basis of their date, motivation and tone.¹⁴

In a 2006 collection edited by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson, aimed at providing 'new perspectives' on Edward's reign, W.M. Ormrod, Ian Mortimer and Michael Prestwich all address Edward's sexual behaviour. Mortimer calls useful, detailed attention to the earliest discussion of the term 'sodomy' in relation to Edward II – a sermon allegedly preached by Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, in 1326 – and presents this, alongside what he argues are the contemporary sexual connotations of Edward's penetrative murder, as the two 'information streams for the sodomitical reputation of Edward II'.¹⁵ Prestwich, in discussion of the character of Edward's court, uses the King's household accounts alongside evidence of legal and religious condemnation of same-sex desire to argue that Edward's relationships with his favourites were not sexual.¹⁶ Ormrod, meanwhile, uses fourteenth-century sources to establish the discourse of 'degeneracy' surrounding Edward, and argues that this was correlated with sex between

11 Hamilton, *Gaveston*, pp. 12–16.

12 Chaplais, *Gaveston*.

13 Burgtof, 'With My Life', p. 32 and *passim*.

14 Phillips, *Edward II*, pp. 96–100.

15 Mortimer, 'Sermons of Sodomy', p. 56 and *passim*.

16 Prestwich, 'Court of Edward II', p. 70.



men in the contemporary imagination.¹⁷ Departing from other historians, he also points out the difficulty of establishing the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour, arguing instead that:

the nature of the evidence makes it impossible to tell what Edward actually did – let alone what he thought himself to be doing – whether and when he engaged in emotional and physical contact with women or men. Rather, we are dealing here, of necessity, with *reputations*: with what people thought and said about Edward II's personality, and the place of his sexuality within it, during his lifetime and in the generation after his demise.¹⁸

In this focus on 'reputations' (as well as in his focus on discourse), I have found Ormrod's work particularly valuable. Quite apart from its considerable value for political historiography, the work of the historians cited above is clearly useful for its assessment of the reliability of contemporary chronicles of Edward's reign as factual sources, and their adherence to the narrative that can be pieced together from charters and other official documents. Yet my own focus on reputation in this book has been productive for two reasons in particular. Firstly, it has relieved me of the obligation to evaluate texts as 'sources' based on their reliability as repositories of fact. Texts like Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon* (1347–1360) and the Long Version of the popular, sensational history known as the prose *Brut* (c. 1337–1347), for example, are both utterly unreliable when evaluated according to this criterion; yet they exerted substantially more influence on Edward II's reputation than did sources like the anonymous *Vita Edwardi Secundi* (written contemporaneously during Edward's reign, probably by a secular clerk) which were closer to the events they describe. Secondly, I have deliberately chosen to abstain from the ongoing and ultimately futile debate about the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour. In making this choice, this book departs from the majority of scholarly historiographical treatments of his reign (Ormrod's excepted). As Phillips puts it, 'Edward II has never been the "possession" wholly of historians'; 'other traditions have built up, and continue to build up around him'.¹⁹ These 'other traditions' have been overwhelmingly characterized by the debate that, in Ormrod's words, 'aims to claim Edward either as gay or as straight'.²⁰ The language of ownership

17 Ormrod, 'Sexualities'.

18 Ormrod, 'Sexualities', p. 22.

19 Phillips, 'Introduction', p. 1.

20 Ormrod, 'Sexualities', p. 22.

employed by both historians is striking, but attention to historiographical scholarship which addresses the question of Edward's sexual behaviour does, in some cases, appear to justify it. There is evidently – even in work that is otherwise essential reading for scholars of Edward II – a temptation towards selective or partial treatment of sources when using them to discuss sexual behaviour, apparently in order to pin down a clear, unambiguous reading of what exactly Edward was doing sexually. Phillips, for example, while dismissing the multiple English sources which 'can be interpreted as implying homosexuality' as 'much later in date or the product of hostility', affords relative credibility to a single Hainault source that suggests adultery between Edward and the wife of the younger Hugh Despenser.²¹ Phillips's unbalanced treatment of sources may not result from conscious bias, but does suggest a heteronormative perspective – arguably an unconscious bias – which scholarly treatments of Edward's sexual behaviour would do well to avoid. On the other side of the debate is Michael Goodich, who asserts that Thomas Burton (an abbot of Meaux Abbey in East Yorkshire, who composed his chronicle around 1388–1396) 'attributed [Gaveston's] death to "too much sodomy"'; in actuality, this text states that Edward himself 'delighted too much in sodomitical vice' (*vitio sodomitico nimium delectabat*), without linking this to any particular event or to any particular favourite.²² Goodich also omits to mention any historiographical disagreement concerning the penetrative manner of Edward's murder, and assumes that this murder method was self-evidently sexually mimetic; his work thereby suggests, through selective handling of evidence, that Edward's near-contemporaries believed unequivocally that he engaged in sex with men.

It is not, then, my intention in this book to 'claim' Edward II for any modern category of sexuality, or even to claim (in the non-possessive sense) that he engaged in any particular sexual acts; and similarly, my analysis of Edward's developing historiographical reputation deliberately acknowledges the ambiguity of certain texts and terminology. Freeing myself from this task has allowed me to step outside of a debate in which scholars have sometimes been unhelpfully dismissive of each other's conclusions. Yet in writing this, I remain aware of both the scholarly context and the wider political context in which this study of Edward II takes place. The question of whether Edward engaged in sexual and romantic relationships with men

21 Phillips, *Edward II*, pp. 97–98.

22 Goodich, *Unmentionable Vice*, p. 11; Burton, *Chronica*, III, 355. For a fuller discussion of the translation of this phrase, see Chapter 1.



is far from an apolitical one, and in stating my intention not to answer it I do not wish to undermine its deeply felt importance for many within and outside academia. It is important to state explicitly that the historiography of Edward II has been inevitably affected by heteronormativity, and by the characterization of relationships between men as sensational and deviant: scholars who now try to address this question would do well to remember that the previous scholarship to which they must respond, and which often unconsciously shapes interpretations of primary texts, has consequently not been neutral or objective. I also understand, and am convinced of, the value of highlighting historical examples of queer experience in combating isolation for modern-day queer people, and in countering those who continue to use the claimed nonexistence of those historical examples as arguments against the validity of modern queer identities. I am equally convinced, however, that the best way to contribute to this conversation is not to present yet another polemical response to a question about the nature of a fourteenth-century man's relationships which can, realistically, never be conclusively answered. Instead, I aim to illuminate how those relationships were constructed historiographically, and how Edward II's reputation developed in medieval and early modern England – a reputation which, based on its adoption as consensus across texts of all genres, became in many ways more significant and influential than the unknowable facts themselves.

Building on the efforts of the historians cited above to establish Edward's reputation during his lifetime and immediate aftermath, this study has a longer temporal scope, allowing me to trace the full process by which a consensus was formed about the sexual and romantic nature of his relationships with his favourites. I also reassess key areas of evidence considered by these scholars, including the precise significations of individual accusations of 'sodomy', and the symbolism of Edward's murder in different texts. For the latter in particular, it has been crucial to draw on genres other than chronicles: plays, poems and political texts were all influential in the development of Edward's reputation.

Given this cross-genre appeal of Edward's narrative, several accounts of his reign have also attracted substantial literary criticism, with which this book also engages. The Long Version of the prose *Brut*, first composed in Anglo-Norman between 1333–1347 (and further popularized in an English translation, known as the Common Version, made in the late fourteenth century), has attracted attention not just as an example of popular medieval history, but for its juxtaposition of legend with sensationalised but fact-based historical accounts; Julia Marvin, particularly pertinently, has

argued that its writer was ‘deeply aware of history as a literary genre’.²³ Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, first printed in 1577 with a second edition (revised by a syndicate of other writers) printed in 1587, have been analysed as sources for literary texts as well as for their ideological stance.²⁴ Christopher Marlowe’s play *Edward II*, printed in 1594 but probably composed in 1591–1592, has received enormous critical attention in relation to its engagement with early modern political and ethical questions, its generic instability, its gendered and sexual politics, and the fertile ground it offers for both queer theory and biographical readings.²⁵ Michael Drayton’s several poems which engage with Edward’s reign, *Peirs Gaveston* (printed in 1594 and revised as *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston* in 1595) and *Mortimeriados* (printed in 1596 and revised as *The Barrons Wars in the Raigne of Edward the Second* in 1603), while initially discussed in relation to their form and their relationship to other contemporary poems framed as ‘mirrors’ or ‘legends’, have more recently been set in the context of Drayton’s literary and political life; critics including Scott Giantvalley and Kelly Quinn have also centred the Edward/Gaveston relationship in their analysis, with Quinn’s work offering a particularly useful contextualisation of Drayton’s Gaveston poems in relation to the wider genre of ‘royal mistress complaint’.²⁶ Elizabeth Cary’s two histories of Edward II’s reign, the folio *History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II* and the octavo *History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II* (composed in 1627–1628 but not printed until 1680), have – once established as her work by Donald Stauffer – been discussed as key examples of women’s engagement with contemporary politics, given their clear allusions to the excessive power of the Duke of Buckingham at Cary’s time of writing, as well as in relation to their generic innovation.²⁷

23 Marvin, ‘Albine and Isabelle’, p. 182. See also Marvin, *Construction*; Marvin, ‘Arthur Authorized’; Marx and Radulescu, *Readers and Writers*; Taylor, ‘French Prose *Brut*’. For the reasoning behind my *terminus ad quem* of 1347 for the Long Version of the Anglo-Norman Prose *Brut*, see Appendix and Chapter 7.

24 Patterson, *Reading Holinshed’s Chronicles*, esp. Introduction and chap. 1; Djordjevic, *Holinshed’s Nation*.

25 For a full overview of criticism, see Farabee, ‘The Critical Backstory’; Haber, ‘State of the Art’.

26 Zocca, *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry*; Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse*; Brink, *Michael Drayton Revisited*; Tillotson, ‘Drayton and Richard II’; Giantvalley, ‘Barnfield, Drayton and Marlowe’; Quinn, ‘Mastering Complaint’.

27 Stauffer, ‘Deep and Sad Passion’; Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices*; Starnier-Wright and Fitzmaurice, ‘Shaping a Drama Out of a History’; Skura, ‘Elizabeth Cary and Edward II’; Britland, ‘Kings Are But Men’; Raber, ‘Introduction’, pp. xxiv–xxv.

This book reads all of these literary texts as stages in the process of forming Edward II's reputation, an approach which freshly illuminates and contextualises their influences and significance. It sees the *Brut*, alongside Marvin, as a profoundly 'literary' history whose preference for sensational detail and narrativity influenced subsequent accounts of Edward's reign for the next three centuries, and which exerted seminal influence on Edward's subsequent reputation as the earliest source for the story of his anally penetrative murder. It sees Holinshed's *Chronicles* as tactically drawing on different sources at different points in its account of Edward's reign in order to create a *de casibus* narrative structure; and as translating the Latin chronicle of the Italian scholar Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia* (composed around 1512–1513 and first printed in Basle in 1534) to create a subtly suggestive account which is clear that Edward's favourites encouraged his sexual transgressions, but stops short of stating that they participated in them. It sees Marlowe's *Edward II* as historiographically innovative – the first text to explicitly present Edward's relationships with his favourites as sexual and romantic – and, as discussed above, it uses this perspective on the play (as one stage in a historiographical process) to develop our understanding of its emotional trajectory and of what happens in the scene where Edward dies. It sees Drayton's poems as in close dialogue with Marlowe, and as provoking both anxiety and enjoyment in their readers through their presentation of Edward and Gaveston's relationship as highly erotic, pleasurable, and pathos-inducing. And it sees Cary's histories as an important example of early seventeenth-century political uses of Edward's reign, as well as a valuable source for the incorporation of Edward into negotiations of the relationship between favouritism and classical ideals of friendship.²⁸

In addition to this analysis of texts traditionally subjected to literary criticism, this book also argues that it is useful to acknowledge the popularity of histories as reading material, and not just as source material. For example, John Stow's account of Edward's reign in his long chronicle (first published in 1580 as *Chronicles*, but better known as *Annales*) – which contains both derivative and innovative elements – had a twofold influence on the formation of Edward's historiographical reputation: Marlowe used it as a source, but it was also itself widely read, and we should take seriously the strategies used by writers like Stow to ensure such popularity and commercial success with readers. Equally, we cannot fully appreciate the significance of literary texts if we do not also investigate their role as sources themselves: Marlowe's

²⁸ See Shannon, 'Monarchs, Minions and "Sovereign" Friendship'; this is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Edward II, for example, impacted subsequent narratives of Edward's reign across multiple genres, including the chronicles which have hitherto been seen primarily as sources for drama. My reading of political pamphlets which deploy Edward as a cautionary exemplum also situates them in this cross-genre tradition, building on the work of Curtis Perry to emphasise that readers' approaches to these texts were influenced by their previous encounters with Edward II's reign and by the wider literary discourse of favouritism.²⁹

It is my hope that this book will influence further reading of Edward II's narrative. Historians of sexuality, and scholars of queer history and literature, will find Chapters 1, 2 and 3 useful for their focus on the sexual and romantic nature of Edward's relationships with his favourites, as well as Chapter 7's reassessment of the penetrative murder's presumed sexually mimetic connotations. Scholars of literature and politics will find Chapter 5's focus on Edward's function as a political exemplum most useful, as well as Chapter 1's discussion of the term 'minion' and Chapter 4's section on Edward's agency and culpability in his relationships with his favourites. For those interested in Marlowe's *Edward II*, while this text remains part of discussions throughout the book, Chapter 2 particularly illuminates its significance in shaping Edward's sexual reputation and Chapter 7 contextualises and re-presents its murder scene. For literary critics of Drayton, the discussions of Gaveston's sexual attractiveness in Chapter 2, Edward's romantic attachment to him in Chapter 3, and his sexual-political influence in Chapter 4 will all be helpful. For those interested in genre, the relationship between literature and history, and the factors that shaped the writing of historical narratives in early modern England, these questions recur throughout the book but are directly addressed in Chapter 6.

My aim here is also to invite scholars from all of these groups to consider *how* we might read these narratives – both narratives of Edward II, and historical narratives from this period more broadly – in a different way. In investigating the development of Edward's reputation, it has consistently been helpful for me to look beyond the techniques traditionally ascribed to the historian, and to also employ techniques associated with literary scholarship. Close textual analysis has helped me to move beyond dismissing certain terms, such as 'sodomy' and 'minion', as hopelessly ambiguous, instead asking what interpretation of an ambiguous term is encouraged by any given text. Cross-genre investigation has been essential in gaining a complete picture of the shifting historiographical consensus concerning Edward and

29 Perry, *Literature and Favoritism*.



his favourites: drama, poetry, chronicles, and political writings all play a significant role in this process. And by considering the decisions that writers of histories made with their readers in mind, I have been able to account for the development of many historiographical trends and the emergence of certain key stories, not least the story of Edward's penetrative murder. This approach, and the findings it has facilitated about the literary nature of medieval and early modern history-writing, demonstrates the broader potential of incorporating literary sources and literary methodologies into historiography; the methodological implications, as it were, of the fact that 'In early modern England the distinction between history and literature was, at least technically, an anachronism'.³⁰ This book demonstrates that the formation of Edward II's reputation over the period 1305–1697 took place across and between texts of several genres; and in many ways, it also took place as a result of creative, literary decisions made by writers in all of those genres. As such, it establishes the paramount importance of considering chronicles and other historical texts *as texts*. Not only were they written for readers to enjoy and, particularly following the advent of printing, to purchase; they were written *by* readers, who consumed earlier historical texts as sources and responded to what they suggested and implied as well as to the facts they explicitly laid out. Moreover, these accounts very often prioritise emotional detail, sensation and narrativity over factual detail. Here, as (I would suggest) in all scholarship of medieval and early modern history-writing, a literary methodology is appropriate to the literary nature of the source material.

Equally useful, however, has been a rigorous historical contextualisation of these narratives of Edward II's reign in terms of their contemporary political allusions, their use of contemporary discourse, and (perhaps most importantly) the way their writers might have conceptualised the sexually transgressive behaviour they allude to. This book is the first attempt to consider the full development of Edward II's reputation from a perspective grounded in the current scholarly understanding of the history of sex. While recognising that Foucault's schema of 'acts' versus 'identities' is ultimately simplistic and reductive – obscuring the sophistication with which the people of medieval and early modern Europe discussed same-sex desire and activity, and reflecting the brevity with which Foucault treated this period within the overall scope of his *History of Sexuality* – recent scholarship in the field of medieval and early modern sexuality continues to emphasise the conceptual distinction between this period's understanding of sex and

30 Kelley and Sacks, 'Introduction', p. 2.



our own.³¹ Although there is evidence to suggest that medieval and early modern English culture ‘did recognize that some people, at least, can be grouped on the basis of their sexual practice’, it seems clear that ‘these groups do not correspond to their modern identity categories either in definition or status’; and similarly, that our modern perceived dichotomy between hetero- and homosexual (culturally entrenched, though clearly equally unsatisfactory for modern identities) is incompatible with medieval and early modern conceptualizations.³² Since the modern terminology of ‘sexuality’ (‘gay’, ‘homosexual’, ‘bisexual’, etc.) inevitably connotes the modern understandings of those categories, scholars have emphasised that it is often more productive to refer to discrete acts (sex, love, desire); and to recognize that the medieval and early modern imagination grouped same-sex desire and activity into a broader schema of unacceptable sex acts which also comprised (for example) adultery, non-procreative sex, bestiality, and masturbation.³³ Even this seemingly clear categorization is ultimately simplistic, since it ignores the influence of other contextual factors – usefully summarised by Mario DiGangi as ‘perceived consonance or dissonance with dominant social ideologies’ – on society’s interpretation of any given act or relationship.³⁴

Recognition of these issues is a productive way to avoid the assumption – found in several recent scholarly treatments of Edward’s reign – that Edward’s marriage and children constitute evidence against his sexual involvement with men.³⁵ It also prompts us to recognize the factors that often obstructed ‘explicit reference’ to sex between men in medieval and early modern England, and thus to avoid holding texts of this period to an unreasonable standard of evidence.³⁶ As Joan Cadden argues, ‘any historical finding, *whether of silence or positive evidence*, must be evaluated [...] in the context of the particular cultural site in which it was generated’.³⁷ Explicit

31 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, I. See for example Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*; Cocks, *Visions of Sodomy*; Bullough, ‘Sin Against Nature’; Lochrie, McCracken and Schultz, *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*; Karras, *Sexuality*; Betteridge, *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*; Crawford, ‘Love, Sodomy and Scandal’; Masten, *Queer Philologies*; Melnikoff, ‘Introduction’.

32 Lochrie, McCracken and Schultz, ‘Introduction’, p. xvi; Sedgwick, *Between Men*.

33 For example, Frantzen, ‘Disclosure of Sodomy’, pp. 451–452; Bray, *Homosexuality*, pp. 14–17, chap. 1; Lochrie, ‘Presidential Improprieties and Medieval Categories’, p. 93; Clarke, ‘The Sovereign’s Vice’, p. 51.

34 DiGangi, *Homoerotics*, pp. ix–x.

35 For example, Haines, *Edward II*, p. 42; Chaplais, *Gaveston*, p. 8; Phillips, *Edward II*, p. 101.

36 Gray, *Scalacronica*, pp. 55, 223 n. 38; Prestwich, ‘Court of Edward II’, pp. 70, 71. See Bray, *Homosexuality*, pp. 67–80; Bullough, ‘Formation of Medieval Ideals’, p. 20.

37 Cadden, ‘Sciences/Silences’, pp. 41–42; emphasis added.

claims that Edward's relationships with his male favourites were sexual are particularly rare in texts written during his reign or that of his son, Edward III. This can be attributed both to their potential political sensitivity, and to the historic status of male-male sex – in particular as an aspect of 'sodomy' – as an 'unnameable' sin: the idiomatic description of sodomy as 'not to be named among Christians' was popularized by the theological work of Thomas Aquinas around 1255.³⁸ While my focus in this book differs from that of most recent historians (in that I am not working to establish the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour), I do think the historiography of Edward II is a field which would significantly benefit from development with this sex-related historical context in mind, and this has influenced my own historicist approach. Just as I want here to show the value of literary critical techniques for historiography, then, I also want to demonstrate the utility of a historically grounded approach for the interpretation of references to sexual transgression in texts of all genres.

This book therefore makes the case for an integrated literary-historical approach to sexual transgression – where historical contextualisation can help us to reach accurate conclusions, and close reading can help us to establish the connotations of ambiguous sexual vocabulary – and to narratives and understanding of the past, which were shaped by both literary and historical considerations. This mixed methodology is not only useful for our own scholarship, but represents, as I argue, an apposite response to the nature of the sources that constituted historical knowledge in medieval and early modern England. In order to take full account of the relationship between literature and history in this period, it is vital that the scope of our sources – and the methods we employ in our analysis – traverse this generic divide.

Structure

While my original plan was to structure this book by genre – addressing Edward's reputation in chronicles, in poetry, in drama, and in political texts – as I read more primary sources it became increasingly apparent that this would be an artificial and arbitrary separation. Not only do texts of different genres frequently influence each other, but the most significant

38 Jordan, *Invention of Sodomy*, pp. 150–151; Salih, 'Sexual Identities'. For fourteenth-century uses of this idiom, see (for example) Chaucer, 'Parson's Tale', p. 320, ll. 907–909; Castleford, *Chronicle*, ll. 38948–38949.

and influential decisions made by writers of chronicles are those with motivations and effects that we would associate with literary composition: decisions about narrative structure, and about inventing or preserving exciting anecdotes and sensational details. I was keen, too, to send a message about the interpretation of the drama and poetry I consider: as discussed above, part of my aim in this book is to shift our perspective on texts like Marlowe's *Edward II*, and to emphasize the potential of considering them as responses and contributions to the wider historiography of Edward II. The book is therefore structured thematically: each chapter addresses a different one of the key preoccupations or features of medieval and early modern narratives of Edward's reign, enabling me to emphasise the cross-genre consistency of these preoccupations while facilitating the book's utility to scholars of different fields.

Chapter 1 – 'Riot, Sodomy, and Minions: The Ambiguous Discourse of Sexual Transgression' – establishes the book's methodology of close attention to language and the value of Edward II's reputation as a case study for the history of sexuality. I discuss the key terms with which medieval and early modern writers articulate Edward II's sexual transgressions; this analysis includes interrogating the accepted translations of Latin and French texts, and arguing for the incorporation of the term 'minion' into our discussion of early modern sexual vocabulary. I emphasise the specific importance of words whose ambiguity could be tactically embraced by medieval and early modern writers: in this case, they allowed writers to suggest that Edward II did engage in sex with men, but provided an element of plausible deniability for this politically sensitive claim. The texts that constitute Edward II's historiographical reputation therefore also constitute a corpus that allows us to assess how writers strategically deployed this ambiguous sexual vocabulary, as well as how they negotiated that ambiguity and encouraged specific interpretations at different moments.

Chapter 2 – 'From Goats to Ganymedes: The Development of Edward II's Sexual Reputation' – provides the first scholarly assessment of how Edward II developed a reputation for having engaged in sexual relationships with his male favourites. Edward's reputation for non-specific sexually transgressive behaviour developed during his reign; however, the first writer to explicitly state that this transgression constituted sex with men was Christopher Marlowe. Following the publication of Marlowe's *Edward II*, discourse concerning Edward and his favourites shifted towards consensus that their relationships were sexual. Marlowe's play can therefore be shown to have influenced writers of chronicles, who were aware that dramatic portrayals of history shaped public opinion, and were keen to



achieve commercial success by mimicking the appealing and sensational aspects of Marlowe's narrative. As well as documenting the cumulative process by which narratives of sexual transgression were shaped, then, this chapter provides new insights into the significance of Marlowe's work, and into the ways in which drama as a genre enabled his historiographical innovation.

Chapter 3 – 'Edward II and Piers Gaveston: Brothers, Friends, Lovers' – takes up the emotional dimension of Edward's relationships with his favourites, considering the significance and decline of medieval claims that Edward 'called Gaveston his brother'; engagements in early modern narratives of Edward's reign with classical ideals of friendship; and the increasing romanticization of his relationship with Gaveston. I show that accounts of Edward's love for his favourites, and his grief at their deaths, are often crafted to elicit sympathy and pathos, and thus represent a valuable source of positive depictions of relationships between men. Moreover, analysis of these depictions in texts of all genres provides insight into the literary influences and motivations of early modern chroniclers, including their incorporation of tropes of the romance genre and the impact of Marlowe's highly emotional representation of Edward and Gaveston in his play *Edward II*.

Chapter 4 – "Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?": Edward II's Agency and Culpability' – addresses the complex political and sexual implications of Edward's close relationships with his favourites. Specifically: given that writers frequently presented Edward's favourites as irresistibly attractive, and as controlling all of his political decisions, how did this affect Edward's culpability for the disastrous events of his reign, or for his transgressive sexual behaviour? The question of Edward's agency and culpability in love and sex tapped into a wider early modern cultural anxiety concerning the potential for everyone to experience unwitting but transgressive attraction. In the case of his political agency, although willingness to attach some blame to Edward himself increases over time – reflecting the increasing temporal remoteness of his reign – chroniclers consistently retained a level of strategic ambivalence, reflecting the fact that it remained politically risky to present Edward's deposition as justified. Through analysis of these accounts, I frame the widely acknowledged polyvocality of early modern chronicles as a consequence of their need to negotiate the engaging political pertinence of their subject matter with its risky, seditious potential. The necessity of this complex political balancing act was, I suggest, an essential factor in shaping the polyvalence of these rich and thoughtful historical accounts.



Chapter 5 – ‘Edward II as Political Exemplum’ – discusses the use of allusions to, or narratives of, Edward II and his favourites to critique monarchs in early modern England and France: Elizabeth I, Henri III of France, James VI/I, Charles I, and James II. Analysis of these allusions in both political pamphlets and literary texts (including a contextualization of Marlowe’s *Edward II* in relation to other contemporary political uses of Edward’s reign) demonstrates the continuing relevance of Edward II’s story to contemporary political issues at multiple points during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the first English King to have been deposed, a paradigmatic example of the dangers of overmighty favourites, and a locus of anxiety about the specific problems caused by favourites who might be sexually attractive to the monarch, Edward was a compelling historical precedent for writers across the political spectrum during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Analysis of the ways in which writers deployed his example provides a valuable case study for investigating how historical exempla functioned in early modern political discourse, and reveals the hermeneutic agency of political writers in the process of ‘using’ history, when examples such as Edward’s deposition could be interpreted as supporting either side of a political debate like the Exclusion Crisis.

Chapter 6 – “No escape now from a life full of suffering”: Edward II’s Sensational Fall’ – analyses accounts of Edward’s deposition and his subsequent imprisonment. I argue that early modern chroniclers exercised creative agency in selecting their sources for this period of Edward’s life, prioritising engaging anecdotes, emotionally compelling detail, and narrativity. In particular, they selected sources which facilitated the construction of Edward II’s reign as a *de casibus* narrative: a popular narrative structure characterized by the image of an ever-rotating ‘wheel of fortune’. Emphasis on the *de casibus* elements of Edward’s story should, I suggest, be seen as a creative decision made with readers in mind: it creates a clear narrative arc with which readers would likely have been familiar from literary texts, enhancing the pleasurable readability of accounts of his reign. Analysis of narratives of Edward II’s fall thereby enables us to appreciate the literary motivations of early modern chroniclers, and the way these motivations shaped their research process as well as their writing.

Chapter 7 – ‘Beyond Sexual Mimesis: The Penetrative Murder of Edward II’ – engages with the narrative that Edward II was murdered by anal penetration with a red-hot spit. My analysis does not draw a conclusion regarding the actual events of Edward’s death, but instead investigates the means by which it became an established consensus in medieval and early modern accounts, and questions its interpretation by scholars as a self-evidently



sexually mimetic murder method with punitive connotations. In fact, the earliest accounts of this murder present it primarily as painful, torturous, and an invisible murder method whose cause of death could not be detected by outward inspection; and importantly, these earliest accounts emerge *before* the formation of a consensus on whether Edward's transgressions were sexual, let alone whether they specifically constituted sex with men. This analysis prompts a reassessment of the place of this narrative in the history of queer sexuality, and of the murder scene in Marlowe's *Edward II*, while also further illuminating the literary priorities of medieval and early modern chroniclers.

My conclusion, 'The Literary Transformation of History' explores the implications of this study for two key areas of scholarship: the study of Marlowe's *Edward II*, and our understanding of medieval and early modern history-writing. I argue that it is productive to acknowledge the extent to which the medieval and early modern writing of history was a literary process, one significantly shaped by literary techniques and literary texts. Medieval and early modern writers constructed historical accounts in all genres – chronicles and political texts as well as drama and poetry – for an imagined reading public. In this way, writers' consideration for imagined readers – based on knowledge of the actual tastes of the reading public – directly shaped the reputations of historical figures.

A note on editorial decisions: I have silently modernized u/v and i/j in quotations from early modern texts, and expanded contractions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own. I have usually provided quotations in the original language alongside translations where this is helpful for the clarity or justification of arguments that rest on close textual analysis.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

- Burton, Thomas, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione usque ad Annum 1396*, ed. by E.A. Bond, 3 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866)
- Castleford, Thomas, *Castleford's Chronicle: Or the Boke of Brut*, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, 'The Parson's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and F.N. Robinson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 288–328
- Gray, Thomas, *Scalacronica, 1272–1363*, ed. and trans. by Andy King, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005)



Secondary Sources

- Beer, Barrett L., 'English History Abridged: John Stow's Shorter Chronicles and Popular History', *Albion*, 36 (2004), 12–27
- Betteridge, Tom (ed.), *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- Boswell, John, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)
- Bray, Alan, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, Morningside ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- Brink, Jean R., *Michael Drayton Revisited* (Boston: Twayne, 1990)
- Britland, Karen, 'Kings Are But Men': Elizabeth Cary's Histories of Edward II', *Études Épistémè. Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation (XVIe – XVIIIe Siècles)*, 17 (2010), 31–53
- Bullough, Vern L., 'Formation of Medieval Ideals: Christian Theory and Christian Practice', in Bullough and Brundage, pp. 14–21
- 'The Sin Against Nature and Homosexuality', in Bullough and Brundage, pp. 55–71
- Bullough, Vern L., and James A. Brundage (eds.), *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994)
- Burgtof, Jochen, "'With My Life, His Joyes Began and Ended": Piers Gaveston and King Edward II of England Revisited', in *Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), V, 31–51
- Cadden, Joan, 'Sciences/Silences: The Natures and Languages of "Sodomy" in Peter of Abano's Problemata Commentary', in Lochrie, McCracken and Schultz, pp. 40–57
- Chaplais, Pierre, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II's Adoptive Brother* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)
- Clarke, Danielle, "'The Sovereign's Vice Begets the Subject's Error": The Duke of Buckingham, "Sodomy" and Narratives of Edward II, 1622–28', in Betteridge, pp. 46–64
- Cocks, Harry, *Visions of Sodom: Religion, Homoerotic Desire, and the End of the World in England, c. 1550–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017)
- Crawford, Katherine B., 'Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (2003), 513–542
- Davies, J. Conway, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II: Its Character and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918)
- DiGangi, Mario, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)



- Djordjevic, Igor, *Holinshed's Nation: Ideals, Memory, and Practical Policy in the Chronicles* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010)
- Dodd, Gwilym, and Anthony Musson (eds.), *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006)
- Farabee, Darlene, 'The Critical Backstory: *Edward II's* Critics in History to 1990', in Melnikoff, *Edward II*, pp. 21–41
- Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3 vols.
- Frantzen, Allen J., 'The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*', *PMLA*, 111 (1996), 451–464
- Giantvalley, Scott, 'Barnfield, Drayton, and Marlowe: Homoeroticism and Homosexuality in Elizabethan Literature', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 16 (1981), 9–24
- Given–Wilson, Chris, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2004)
- Goodich, Michael, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1979)
- Haber, Judith, 'The State of the Art: Desire, History, and the Theatre', in Melnikoff, *Edward II*, pp. 73–96
- Haines, R.M., *King Edward II* (Montréal and London: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2003)
- Hamilton, J.S., *Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, 1307–1312: Politics and Patronage in the Reign of Edward II* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press; London: Harvester–Wheatsheaf, 1988)
- Hulse, Clark, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)
- Jordan, Mark D., *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997)
- Karras, Ruth Mazo, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, 3rd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2017)
- Kelley, Donald R. and David Harris Sacks, 'Introduction', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500–1800*, ed. by Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–10
- Krontiris, Tina, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Lochrie, Karma, 'Presidential Improprieties and Medieval Categories: The Absurdity of Heterosexuality', in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 87–96
- Lochrie, Karma, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, 'Introduction', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. ix–xviii



- Maddicott, J.R., *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307–1322: A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
- Marvin, Julia, 'Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* Chronicles', *Arthurian Literature*, 18 (2001), 143–191
- 'Arthur Authorized: The Prophecies of the *Prose Brut* Chronicle', *Arthurian Literature* 22 (2005), 84–99
- *The Construction of Vernacular History in the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle: The Manuscript Culture of Late Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2017)
- Marx, William, and Raluca Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut* (Lampeter: Trivium Publications, University of Wales, 2006)
- Masten, Jeffrey, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)
- Melnikoff, Kirk, 'Introduction', in Melnikoff, *Edward II*, pp. 1–20
- Melnikoff, Kirk (ed.), *Edward II: A Critical Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017)
- Metzger, Marcia Lee, 'Controversy and "Correctness": English Chronicles and the Chroniclers, 1553–1568', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27 (1996), 437–451
- Mortimer, Ian, 'Sermons of Sodomy: A Reconsideration of Edward II's Sodomitical Reputation', in Dodd and Musson, pp. 48–60
- Ormrod, W.M., 'The Sexualities of Edward II', in Dodd and Musson, pp. 22–47
- Patterson, Annabel, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- Perry, Curtis, *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Phillips, J.R.S., *Edward II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010)
- 'Edward II [Edward of Caernarfon] (1284–1327)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-978019861412-e-8518>> [accessed 26 January 2020]
- 'Introduction', in Dodd and Musson, pp. 1–3
- Prestwich, Michael, 'The Court of Edward II', in Dodd and Musson, pp. 61–75
- Quinn, Kelly, 'Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints', *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–460
- Raber, Karen, 'Introduction', in *Elizabeth Cary*, ed. by Karen Raber (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. xii–xxix
- Salih, Sarah, 'Sexual Identities: A Medieval Perspective', in Betteridge, pp. 112–130
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

- Shannon, Laurie, 'Monarchs, Minions and "Sovereign" Friendship', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 97 (1998), 90–112
- Starner-Wright, Janet, and Susan M. Fitzmaurice, 'Shaping a Drama Out of a History: Elizabeth Cary and the Story of Edward II', *Critical Survey*, 14 (2002), 79–90
- Stauffer, Donald A., 'A Deep and Sad Passion', in *The Parrott Presentation Volume*, ed. by Hardin Craig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), pp. 289–314
- Taylor, John, 'The French Prose *Brut*: Popular History in Fourteenth-Century England', in *England in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. by W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986), pp. 247–254
- Tillotson, Kathleen, 'Drayton and Richard II', *Review of English Studies*, 15 (1939), 172–179
- Tout, T.F., *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914)
- Walker, Simon, 'Remembering Richard: History and Memory in Lancastrian England', in *Political Culture in Later Medieval England: Essays by Simon Walker*, ed. by Mike J. Braddick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 183–197
- Wheatley, Chloe, *Epic, Epitome, and the Early Modern Historical Imagination* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011)
- Woolf, Daniel, 'Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth Century', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 321–354
- *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Zocca, Louis, *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950)