

Ideals and values in Jean Froissart's

Chroniques

by

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1. Introduction

In the evening [after the battle of Poitiers] the Prince of Wales gave a supper for the King of France, Lord Philippe, his son, Lord Jakeme de Bourbon and most of the captured counts and barons of France. The Prince seated the King and his son . . . at a high table well provided, and the rest of the nobles at other tables. The whole time, the Prince served at both the King's and other tables as humbly as he could. He refused to sit at the King's table, insisting that he was not yet worthy to sit at the table of so mighty a prince and so brave a soldier as he [the King of France] had proved himself to be on that day. He constantly kneeled before him, saying: "Dear sir, . . . My father will certainly show you every mark of honour and friendship in his power, and will come to such a reasonable understanding with you that you will always remain firm friends. In my opinion, you have good cause to be joyful, although the battle did not go in your favour, for today you have won the highest renown of prowess, excelling the best of your knights. I do not say this to flatter you, for everyone on our side, having seen how each man fought, unanimously agrees with this and awards you the prize and the chaplet, if you will consent to wear them'. At these words all those present murmured their approval, French and English remarking to each other that the Prince had spoken nobly and to the point. Their esteem for him increased and it was generally agreed that in him they would have a most chivalrous lord and master if he was granted life and to persevere in such good fortune.¹

¹ Luce, Siméon, ed.: *Chroniques de Jean Froissart*, Société de l'Histoire de France. Livre 1. Tome V § 397. Hereafter abbreviated SHF. Tome et §. This passage will be further dealt with in Chapter 2 where the original text is also found in the notes. See note 140 pp. 40 - 41.

1.1.The Problem

The passage quoted above is taken from the *Chroniques*, a historical narrative, more than a million words in length, written in Middle French prose in the last half of the 14th century by Jean Froissart, a poet and chronicler from Valenciennes in Hainault.² Froissart left a large range of writings: numerous poems,³ and *Méliador*, an Arthurian *roman*. However, the most widely read work is his chronicles, which amongst other things recount the events of the Hundred Years War between France and England and their respective allies, the dealings and life at the court of the Count de Foix, popular uprisings in England, Flanders and France, and the downfall of the English King, Richard II. The passage quoted deals with Edward the Black Prince's treatment of the French king, John the Good, after the battle of Poitiers in 1356, where the English destroyed the French army while raiding out of Bordeaux, and it is often referred to as a prime example of chivalrous behaviour and aristocratic mentality in the Middle Ages. Although Froissart claims that somewhere close to 6,000 men died that day together with 'the finest flower of French chivalry',⁴ he is seemingly more preoccupied with the gallant behaviour of the young Prince than with the horrible

² Froissart was born, we believe, in 1337 and died at the very beginning of the 15th century, most likely in 1404. On Froissart, see Jones, Michael: 'Froissart, Jean', in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, Oxford 1984. t. 21. pp. 57 - 60.

³ Froissart's other work includes *Le paradis d'amour* (c.1361-2), *Le joli mois de mai* (c. 1363), *Dit dou bleu chevalier*, *Dit de la marguerite* (c.1364), *L'espINETTE amoureuse* (c. 1369-70), *La prison amoureuse* (c. 1371-2) and *Le joli buisson de Jonece* (1373).

⁴ SHF Livre I.Tome V. § 395. 'Et fu là morte, si com on recordoit adonc pour le temps, toute li fleur de le chevalerie de France: de quoi li nobles royaumes fu durement afoiblis, et en grant misère et tribulation eschei, ensi que vous orés recorder chi après. Avoecques le roy et son jone fil monseigneur Phelippe, eut pris dix sept contes, sans les barons, les chevaliers et les escuiers; et y mors entre cinq mil et sept cens et six mil hommes, uns qu'autres. Quant il furent tout ou en partie repairiet de la cace et revenu devers le prince . . . si trouvèrent que il avoient deux tans de priosnniers qu'il ne fuissent de gens.'

tragedy that just had taken place.⁵ The description of the Black Prince, not only entertaining his defeated opponent courteously, but serving King John in what Froissart describes as a humble manner, praising the defeated opponent's prowess and martial skills, bears witness to a society where people adhered to different ideals and were motivated by other values than modern men. Thus, the passage brings us to the theme of this thesis, namely the ideals and values described and propagated by Froissart in his *Chroniques*.

Since the publication in 1930 of F. S. Shear's monograph *Froissart, Chronicler and Poet*, very few scholars have analyzed Froissart's historical narratives until the beginning of the eighties when J. J. N. Palmer edited the symposium *Froissart. Historian*.⁶ In 1981 Georg Jäger published *Aspekte des Krieges und der Chevalerie im XIV. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zu Jean Froissart's Chroniques*.⁷ The chivalry depicted in Froissart's historical narrative was further dealt with in the 1985 monograph by George T. Diller; *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart*.⁸ In the past ten years or so three important full - length works on Froissart have been published; Peter Ainsworth's *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History* from 1994,⁹ Michel Zink's *Froissart et le temps* from 1998¹⁰ and Marie-Thérèse de Medeiros *Hommes, terres et histoire de*

⁵ For a thorough outline of the preliminaries and the battle of Poitiers see Green, David: *The battle of Poitiers 1356*. Stroud 2002.

⁶ Palmer, J. J. N., ed.: *Froissart: Historian*. Woodbridge 1981. Froissart's work has, for instance, been the subject of Coulton, G.C: *The Chronicler of European Chivalry*. London 1930 and Wilmotte, M.: *Froissart*. Brussels 1942.

⁷ Jäger, G.: *Aspekte des Krieges und der Chevalerie im XIV. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zu Jean Froissarts Chroniques*. Bern 1981.

⁸ Diller, George T.: *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart. Microlectures du premier livres des Chroniques*. Genève 1984.

⁹ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990.

¹⁰ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998.

confins: les marges méridionales et orientales de la chrétienté dans les 'Chroniques' de Froissart, from 2003.¹¹ A collection of essays resulting from a symposium at Amherst, edited by Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox was published in 1998.¹²

Froissart has often been labelled as the 'Chronicler of Chivalry', sometimes in a disparaging manner. Especially harsh was the critic of some historians and literary scholars of the first half of the 20th century. Auguste Molinier, for instance, claimed Froissart to be superficial and unable to disclose the intentions of princes,¹³ while Paris Gaston and Alfred Jeanroy saw Froissart as an author who did not reflect on the events he describes; 'all which is not brilliance, light or exterior life escape him.'¹⁴ According to Albert Pauphilet, Froissart's understanding of the world and the society he lived in, was so limited that 'compared to writers like Villehardouin and Commines, he does not appear very intelligent'.¹⁵

These severe judgements are clearly wrong, says George T. Diller in his analysis *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart* from 1984.¹⁶ In his narrative,

¹¹ Medeiros, Marie-Thérèse de: *Hommes, terres et histoire de confins: les marges méridionales et orientales de la chrétienté dans les 'Chroniques' de Froissart*. Paris 2003.

¹² Maddox, Donald and Sara Sturm-Maddox, eds.: *Froissart across the Genres*. Gainesville 1998.

¹³ 'Enfin il n'a vu que le côté extérieure des choses . . . il n'a du monde de son temps qu'une idée superficielle, et n'a jamais deviné les intentions de princes'. Auguste Molinier in *Les Sources de l'Histoire*. Tome IV. Paris 1904. p. 13.

¹⁴ Paris, Gaston and Jeanroy, Alfred: *Extraits des chroniqueurs français*. Paris 1927. p. 186. 'Il a merveilleusement peint son époque et il l'a peu comprise; il n'a pas réfléchi sur ces événements, dont le récit lui plaisait tant . . . Tout ce qui n'est point éclat, lumière, vie extérieure, lui échappe: Le bruit de l'histoire lui en a caché le sens.'

¹⁵ Pauphilet, Albert: *Historiens et Chroniqueurs du Moyen Age*, édition établie et annotée par Albert Pauphilet. Textes nouveaux commentés par Edmond Pognon. 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', no. 48, Paris 1952. p. 374.

¹⁶ Diller, George T.: *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart. Microlectures du premier livres des Chroniques*. Genève 1984. p. 6. Diller discusses the opinions above in the Introduction to his book and asks: 'Autant que l'exemple qui fait briller la renommée du preux, l'écriture ici ne deviendrait-elle pas l'instrument d'une volonté de scruter la mentalité des

Froissart was able to illuminate both the causes of events and the mentality of his contemporaries, says Diller. The view that Froissart was essentially occupied by relating glorious events has, however, also been argued by scholars writing more recently. To Froissart, says Pierre Tucoo-Chala, the Hundred Years war was a series of man-to-man combat - 'une suite de prouesses' - that do not end but to give way to descriptions of sumptuous tournaments and refined celebrations.¹⁷ Froissart's goal according to Stephen G. Nichols, was 'to create an image of a world in which prowess, in the quasi-mystical sense of the term developed from Arthurian romance, shines forth as the guiding principle of men's actions with an intensity equal to that of any previous age evoked by myth or epic.'¹⁸ Philippe Contamine argues that Froissart's primary objective was to present his public, the chivalrous class, with models and heroes to whom they could refer and compare themselves.¹⁹

According to the American medievalist William Brandt we must understand that chivalry, the aristocratic codex for correct behaviour, ordered men's lives on the most important level and provided the measure for failure and disorder.²⁰ However, chivalry was not only a behavioural codex. It was also a perceptual mode giving form and meaning to the reality in which the knight lived, he says.²¹ As a result

contemporains, voire celle du chroniqueur lui-meme: cette écriture ne serait-elle pas enfin capable de répandre de la lumière sur leurs codes interprétatifs du passé?

¹⁷ Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus - Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 33.

¹⁸ Nichols, Stephen G.: 'Discourse in Froissart's *Chroniques*' in *Speculum*, Vol. 39, No.2 April 1964. pp. 279 - 87.

¹⁹ Contamine, Philippe: 'Froissart: Art Militaire, pratique et conception de la Guerre' in Palmer, J. J. N., ed.: *Froissart: Historian*. Woodbridge 1981. pp. 132 - 34. 'Froissart entend fournir aux jeunes gentilshommes, aux écuyers débutant dans le métier des armes, qu'ils soient riches ou pauvres, "matere et exemple", il veut leur procurer des modèles, des héros pour s'y référer ou s'y comparer. Les *Chroniques* sont et seront la "memore des bons et li recors des preus." '

²⁰ Brandt, W. J. : *The shape of Medieval History*. New Haven 1966. p. 108.

²¹ Brandt, W. J. : *The shape of Medieval History*. New Haven 1966. p. 140.

aristocratic chroniclers like Froissart were unable to interpret the world as anything other than a stage where the noble acted according to chivalrous *stance*.

Viewpoints like the ones related above have found support in the fact that Froissart himself, at the beginning of his chronicles, states the aim of his work to be to inspire young knights to valiant behaviour: 'Et ce sera à yaus matère et exemples de yaus encoragier en bien faisant, car la memore des bons et li recors de preus atisent et enflament par raison les coers des jones bacelers, qui tirent et tendent à toute perfection d'onneur, de quoi proèce est li principaus chiés et li certains ressors.'²²

However, in recent years, George T. Diller's view that Froissart's work, his intentions and his scope, should be considered to be far more complex and broader than hitherto believed has been supported by Peter F. Ainsworth and Michel Zink. Although Ainsworth, Diller and Zink agree that Froissart essentially was occupied by transmitting to posterity the ancient values of chivalry,²³ and admired chivalry and all it stood for unreservedly,²⁴ all three scholars have also argued that Froissart's chronicles are far more than just endless celebrations of prowess, tournaments and glorious feasts, especially, in the later parts of his chronicles and in the revised edition of his first book, the 'Rome edition', undertaken at approximately the same time as he was finishing the last of the four books making up his chronicles.²⁵ Here we find a narrative marked by a changing ethos, 'un idéal chevaleresque, et par conséquent romanesque et moral, qui se heurte constamment à sa quête de la vérité

²² SHF Livre I.Tome II. Prologue.

²³ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 6.

²⁴ Diller, George T.: *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart. Microlectures du premier livres des Chroniques*. Genève 1984. p. 31.

²⁵ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. p. 53.

historique', 'accents of a discreet irony' and a subtle shift of perspective 'to be watching human history from a more detached position than hitherto.'²⁶

Related to the discussion above is a more general debate amongst historians on the decline of chivalry in the later middle ages. In a biography relating the life and deeds of Gaston Fébus, one of the men seemingly most admired by Froissart in his account, Pierre Tucco-Chala states:

'Vers le milieu du XIVe siècle coexistent au sein de la chevalerie trois type d'hommes se mouvant dans des univers mentaux différents: les idéalistes estimant indispensable de respecter en toute circonstance le code de l'honneur, répudiant toute manoeuvre stratégique comme une trahison, concevant le combat comme un jugement de Dieu où l'on s'affronte loyalement en fonçant l'un contre l'autre; les réalistes estimant au contraire ces pratiques révolues, utilisant toutes les méthodes pour gouverner à condition d'avoir le succès, meurtre et parjure compris; à mi-chemin certains essayèrent de tenir compte des faits tout en essayant de sauver les apparences. Edouard III d'Angleterre appartenait à cette dernière catégorie, Jean II le Bon à la première; le résultat était connu d'avance. Charles II le Mauvais roi de Navarre pencha vers la solution annonçant les tyrans de la Renaissance . . .'²⁷

²⁶ Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 261 - 64.

²⁷ Tucco-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus - Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 35.

Tucoo-Chala's argument that the middle of the 14th century was a transitional time when chivalrous ideals were losing ground in favour of a new mentality is in keeping with the general ideas set forward, almost a century ago, by Johan Huizinga in his famous book *The Waning of the Middle Ages* where he discusses the status of chivalry and its implications for noble behaviour at the end of the period now referred to as the Middle Ages.²⁸ According to Huizinga the social, technical and political changes of the later Middle Ages meant that chivalrous values and the quest for honour had to give way to the quest for material gain and victory.²⁹ Huizinga saw late medieval chivalry as 'a rather artificial revival of things long dead, a sort of deliberate and insincere renaissance of ideas drained of any real value'.³⁰ While the nobleman of the earlier Middle Ages had been guided by a strict moral code, chivalry in the later Middle Ages had become an historical anachronism and had outlived its value both as a guide to social behaviour and as an ethical code, says Huizinga, a view also shared by other scholars of his time. 'Self-interest, backed by diplomacy, was rapidly replacing the medieval sentiment of honour, and in the following century chivalric principles had so completely succumbed to Machiavellian doctrines that Commines, the counsellor of Louis XI, asserts as his maxim that honour is always on the side of the winner', writes F. S. Shears in his book on *Froissart. Chronicler and Poet*,³¹ while the English medievalist Raymond Kilgour in his book *The Decline of Chivalry*, argued that chivalry had lost its deeper value for society by the end of the thirteenth century with 'the advent of such a

²⁸ First published in 1919 as *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: Studie over levens- en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden*. Harlem 1919. For a recent discussion on Huizinga and his work see Peters, Edward and Simons, Walter P.: 'The New Huizinga and the Old Middle Ages' in *Speculum*. Vol. 74. No. 3. July 1999. pp. 587 - 620.

²⁹ Huizinga, Johan: *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth 1965. p. 65 and p. 73.

³⁰ Huizinga, Johan: 'La valeur politique et militaire des idées de chevalerie à la fin du moyen âge', originally a lecture given at the general assembly of the Société d'Histoire Diplomatique, June 16, 1921. Here quoted from *Men and Ideas*. New York 1959. pp. 196 - 206.

³¹ Shears, F.S.: *Froissart. Chronicler and Poet*. London 1930. p. 146.

figure as Philippe le Bel, a living symbol of the coldly practical spirit that succeeds each burst of human enthusiasm'.³² Undermined and challenged by for instance the bourgeois ethos, a more practical, rational and modern approach to war and politics became the norm and the quest for material gain and victory increased.³³ Thus, late medieval chivalry was but mere 'posturing', a game 'whose participants in order to forget reality, turned to the illusion of a brilliant, heroic existence', concluded Kilgour who based his findings on an in-depth analysis of various texts from the Late Middle Ages, including Froissart's chronicles.

Although the works quoted above are now considered fairly outdated, a fairly similar opinion to Kilgour's has been voiced by the American medievalist Gabrielle Spiegel in the conclusion to her book *Romancing the past. The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*: 'Historical writing in Old French prose had begun as the historiography of a lost cause, offering a threatened elite a vehicle through which to recuperate a sense of social worth and political legitimacy', says Spiegel. 'The French aristocracy's romancing of the past, in that sense, entailed both the *mise en roman* -- the recasting of historical writing into Old French -- and the quest for a lost world of chivalric power, ethical value, and aristocratic autonomy, all of which had been severely undermined by the growth of royal government in the thirteenth century.'³⁴

³² Kilgour, Raymond L.: *The Decline of Chivalry as shown in the French literature of the Late Middle Ages*. Cambridge. Massachusetts 1937. p. 4.

³³ In his essay 'The Merchant in Medieval Society', the Russian scholar Aron Gurevitch sees the Merchant as the type of person who eventually merged into the more rational, calculating politician and military-leader we find later. The aristocrat, however, was completely different from his town-dwelling contemporary. 'To the warlike virtues and the impulsive emotivity of the nobles he (the Merchant) opposed careful calculation and cause-and-effect thinking; to irrationality, he opposed rationality'. See Gurevich, A.: 'The Merchant' in Le Goff, Jaques, ed: *The Medieval World*. London 1990. p. 281.

³⁴ Spiegel M. Gabrielle: *Romancing the past. The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*. Berkeley 1993. p. 317.

Maurice Keen, in his work *Chivalry* from 1984, also set forward the opinion that the traditional chivalrous ethos was not always lived up to in late medieval society. Here, Keen points out the gap between the chivalrous ideal, as it is found in romance works and historical narratives of the age, and actual chivalrous practices in the later Middle Ages.³⁵ However, unlike what many historians have believed, says Keen, a discrepancy between the ideal propagated in literary and historical texts and actual practice was not something new in the later Middle Ages. On the contrary, already in the twelfth century we find authors like Orderic Vitalis, William of Tyre and Peter of Blois all complaining that the knights of their day had lost their vigour and morale. This observation, he says, challenges the whole notion of a chivalrous ideal in decline, because it is on the assumption of a profound contrast between the modes of thought, ideals and practices in the earlier Middle Ages that chivalry is said to be in decline in the later Middle Ages.³⁶ In fact, says Keen, there was no such thing as a 'break' between the chivalrous ideals and practices of the earlier and later middle ages, and the concept of chivalry lost none of its force. 'It's essential constituents - loyalty, generosity and courage - were not much altered. Where old ways, modified as necessary, could be related to altered structures, there chivalry did not fade or decline with the coming of the Renaissance. It might parade in new dress . . . but what this denoted was a change of the chivalric courtier's wardrobe rather than a change of heart.'³⁷

³⁵ Keen, Maurice: *Chivalry*. Yale 2005. (1984). p. 230.

³⁶ Keen, Maurice: 'Huizinga, Kilgour and the Decline of Chivalry' in *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Culture*. ed. Paul Maurice Clogan. Cambridge 1977. p. 5.

³⁷ Keen, Maurice: *Chivalry*. Yale 2005. (1984). p. 249.

Keen's view that chivalry as a concept continued to be of vital importance in the later Middle Ages has been supported both by Malcolm Vale³⁸ and the French historian Jean Flori.³⁹ It is also in accordance with the view set forward by John Barnie in his book *War in Medieval Society* from 1974 where he argues that there is no reason to conclude that late medieval aristocratic authors saw a real discrepancy between the harsher aspects of war and politics and the chivalrous ideals.⁴⁰ The chivalrous code, although simpler and more eclectic than researchers have thought, still provided a mental framework for members of the nobility, he states,⁴¹ an opinion shared by Richard Vernier in his recent biography on Bertrand du Guesclin,⁴² one of the men highly praised by Froissart in his account, and Peter Coss who in his book *The Knight in Medieval England* states that 'No one now seriously believes that the chivalry of the fourteenth century was a corruption of a twelfth century ideal.'⁴³

³⁸ Vale, Malcolm: *War and Chivalry: Warfare, Aristocratic and Culture in England, France, and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages*. London 1981. p. 128. Vale opposes the view that chivalry had a minimal influence on war and politics in the later Middle Ages. Instead it changed, and chivalrous sentiments of honour and renown were welded on to concepts of service to the prince. The cult of honour, which replaced chivalry in the sixteenth century, had much in common with chivalric ideas, and the behaviour of Renaissance nobles in war was still informed upon personal honour and loyalty to a sovereign prince, like in the earlier days, says Vale.

³⁹ Flori, Jean: *Chevaliers et chevalerie au Moyen Age*. Paris 1998. p. 269. 'Au XVe siècle, malgré les tendances qui s'amorcent dans cette direction, l'on est encore loin de cet ultime avatar de la chevalerie, dont l'idéologie imprégnait encore fortement les esprits, mêlant l'éthique guerrière et le sens de l'honneur aux mondanités aristocratiques et aux vanités des apparences. L'étude des règlements de ces ordres de chevalerie, celle des lois de l'héraldique et des traités qui s'y rapportent, l'analyse des biographies chevaleresques qui se multiplient à cette époque, révèle l'omniprésence de cette idéologie chevaleresque dans les esprits du Moyen Age finissant et ses survivances ultérieures.'

⁴⁰ Barnie, J.: *War in Medieval Society. Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. p. 56.

⁴¹ Barnie, J.: *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. p. 58.

⁴² Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. pp. 14 - 15.

⁴³ Coss, Peter: *The Knight in Medieval England 1000 - 1400*. Stroud 1993. p. 110.

As we may see, most modern historians working specifically on chivalry in the late middle ages seem to agree that there was in fact no such thing as a decline in the chivalric sentiment and ideals in this period. Although a slight tension between the chivalrous ideal propagated and the descriptions of practice might be felt in the historical narratives of the age, this is similar to what we may find in earlier works. However, Peter Ainsworth and Michel Zink have reached other conclusions in their works on Froissart. In the discussion of the first book of Froissart's chronicles and its various redactions, Ainsworth argues that the Rome manuscript of this book, probably undertaken around the same time as Froissart finished his fourth book, is marked by a changing ethos and an atmosphere marked by 'malice, opportunism, hypocrisy and self-interestedness alongside the depiction of chivalrous valour and energy'.⁴⁴ The chronicler seems to be aware, here, of the ironic distance between appearance and reality, between ideal and practice, says Ainsworth who also points out that warfare is increasingly evoked by Froissart as a social evil, even as deeds of chivalry are commended. ' . . . it is as though Froissart does not quite succeed in reconciling the many perceived contradictions between old, trusted ideal, and new, model behaviour that are reflected in his pages', states Ainsworth.⁴⁵

According to Michel Zink this change takes place even before the redaction of the Rome manuscript, at the beginning of Book III where Froissart describes his *Voyage en Béarn* and his visit at the court of Gaston Fébus. 'Un moment vient où la référence au passé romanesque perd sa raison d'être. Froissart ne croit plus à l'avènement de la chevalerie, parce qu'il découvre - l'âge et l'expérience venant, à mesure aussi qu'il

⁴⁴ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 268. In addition Froissart here introduces a somewhat unexpected gallery of pragmatists, says Ainsworth, like for instance Jean III, duke of Brabant, a new type of political creature in the *Chroniques*, 'ambitious, cynically self-interested and dangerous.'

⁴⁵ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 305.

devient plus exigeant avec l'information qu'il recueille et qu'il la contrôle plus soigneusement - que les comportements politiques et même militaires se conforment rarement à l'idéal chevaleresque'. At the moment when Froissart introduces himself and his experiences in the text, the nature of his work is changing, says Zink.⁴⁶

Zink and Ainsworth seem to be of the opinion that the discrepancies between ideal and reality are not so easily disregarded in Froissart's work, and can be seen as a sign of a changing ethos - a change in mentality. However, unlike Kilgour and Huizinga, Zink and Ainsworth are unwilling to claim that Froissart was unaware of this himself, or that he lacked the capability to understand what he was doing. 'Vraiment, Froissart n'est plus le jeune homme euphorique, ébloui par la cour de la reine Philippa et par le panache chevaleresque', says Zink.⁴⁷ Citing Dembowski's statement that 'There is no real reason to believe that Froissart was unaware of the contradictions between the facts of fourteenth-century political life and his concept of the "restored" ideals of chivalry',⁴⁸ Ainsworth says that he would only add to this viewpoint 'that Froissart's awareness, coupled with a growing apprehension, seems to have deepened over the years.'⁴⁹

Brian Stock, in the book *Listening for the Text*, states that in any given community or period of time, two sorts of change are presumably going on at once.⁵⁰ 'There is real change, which is happening but may not be perceived, and there is perceived change,

⁴⁶ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. p. 63.

⁴⁷ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. p. 96.

⁴⁸ Ainsworth is citing Dembowski, P. F.: Jean Froissart and his "Meliador" in *Context, Craft and Sense*. Lexington 1983. p. 181.

⁴⁹ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 305.

⁵⁰ Stock, Brian: *Listening for the Text. On the uses of the Past*. Philadelphia 1990. p. 76.

which may or may not be taking place.' According to Stock, historical writing is largely the story of perceived change, in the sense that it does not reflect change directly. Instead, historical narratives tell the story of various, partial recordings of change. In the following I will attempt to discuss and analyze the values and ideals propagated by Froissart in his chronicles. Do we find that Froissart is essentially celebrating prowess and other traditional chivalrous virtues in his descriptions of great magnates, military campaigns and politics? Or may we, as has been argued by Ainsworth and Zink, find evidence of a change in his outlook and ideals? And if we do, what can Froissart's account disclose when it comes to changes in views on society, war and politics at the end of the 14th century?

1.2. The author and his *Chroniques*

The *Chroniques* is a historical narrative, consisting of four books, relating a whole range of events in the period from around 1322 to 1400. It is based on material Froissart collected both from other texts and from what he heard or experienced himself. According to the author the collection of material for his chronicles started shortly after the battle of Poitiers in 1356, when he was in his early twenties,⁵¹ and his account was first based on the work of Jean le Bel,⁵² canon of Liège and author of a prose chronicle relating the early stages of the Hundred Years War.⁵³ Le Bel's

⁵¹ Fowler, Kenneth: 'Froissart, Chronicler of Chivalry' in *History Today*. Vol 36. (1986), pp. 50-54. Froissart claimed to have had a vivid interest in chivalrous culture and history from an even earlier age. See also Ainsworth, Peter: 'Jean Froissart: a sixcentary reappraisal' in *French studies*. Vol. LIX, No.3. 2005. pp. 364 - 72.

⁵² Although Froissart chose to alter le Bel's description completely at some crucial points, many of the passages in Froissart's *Chroniques* have been copied from le Bel. For a longer discussion of this, see Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 32 - 35.

⁵³ Viard, J. et Déprez, E., ed.: *Chronique de Jean Le Bel*, Société de l'Histoire de France. Hereafter abbreviated Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chp. Jean le Bel was initially a soldier and the constant companion of Jean, Count of Beaumont, with whom he went to England and Scotland in 1327. Le Bel later retired to Liège where he held a canonry at the cathedral and composed what he called '*Vrayes Chroniques*' ('True Chronicles'), recounting the events of the reign of Edward III.

chronicle, which has recently been analysed by Nicole Chayreyron,⁵⁴ was written at the request of Count Jean of Beaumont, with whom le Bel went to England and Scotland in 1327. The events related by le Bel are often in accordance with what we know to be historical realities.⁵⁵

Froissart started writing his chronicle when he, in the period 1361 - 68, was in the service of Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England, her husband King Edward III, and their sons, Edward (later called the Black Prince) and the Duke of Clarence. At the English court, Froissart met with many leading English knights and French prisoners from the battle of Poitiers and hostages for the treaty of Brétigny (1360), and was able to gather first hand information about these events. He also witnessed the departure of Edward, the Prince, for Gascony in 1362 and saw Jean the Good of France return to English captivity in February 1364 'to save his honour' after his son, Louis, Duke of Anjou, had escaped his imprisonment in England.⁵⁶ Froissart also stayed at the court of David II of Scotland at Edinburgh for a while. In 1366, Froissart travelled to Brabant where he met his later patrons the duke Wenesclas and his wife. Somewhat later, in 1367, he was present at the baptism of the future Richard II at Edward, the Prince's, court at Bordeaux. Around this time, preparations were also being made for the Prince's expedition to support Pedro of Castile in his struggle against his bastard brother, Enrique de Trastamara. This struggle ended in the battle of Najera in April

His work was known only in fragments until 1861 and a complete edition was not published until 1863.

⁵⁴ Chareyron, Nicole: *Jean le Bel Le Maitre de Froissart, grand imagier de la Guerre de Cent Ans.* (Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 7.) Brussels: De Boeck Université. 1996.

⁵⁵ Chareyron, Nicole: *Jean le Bel Le Maitre de Froissart, grand imagier de la Guerre de Cent Ans.* (Bibliothèque du Moyen Age, 7) Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1996. See chapter II 'Dossiers de l'histoire et quête de la vérité'.

⁵⁶ At Bretigny the English were confirmed in possession of Aquitaine, Calais and Ponthieu, and King John, a prisoner of war since Poitiers, was released on promise of a huge ransom. However, important hostages, including his son Louis, were retained to guarantee payment. When Louis fled, John returned to England where he later died.

1367 where Enrique was defeated. Although Froissart was not present, these events are, as we shall see later, amply described in the chronicles.

After the death of Philippa in 1369 Froissart spent much of his time in Brabant, where he enjoyed the favour and protection of a series of nobles in Hainault and elsewhere. He also became the chaplain of Guy II de Chatillon, Count of Blois, under whose auspices he was ordained canon of Chimay. On the Count's request, he continued the work on his chronicles, and travelled as far as Orthez in Béarn, a territory bordering French territory in Languedoc, English territory in Gascony and the Kingdom of Navarre in Spain to gather information for Book III of his chronicles. Here he met Gaston Fébus of Foix, Count of Béarn, an encounter further discussed in chapter 2. The last part of Froissart's narrative, Book IV, was also written at the request of Guy de Blois, and recounts events like the French-English negotiations at Abbeville in 1393, his return to England in 1395 - 96 where he personally met Richard II and the affaires and intrigues at the French and English courts. It ends with the description of Richard's downfall and death in 1399.

Book I of the *Chroniques* exists in three main versions. The first of these, preserved in about fifty manuscripts, incorporates virtually unchanged, long passages of le Bel's chronicle.⁵⁷ The *seconde rédaction*, the Amiens MS, exists in a single complete manuscript. This is also the case for the third version, the Rome MS, which was probably undertaken at the same time as Froissart was completing the second half of Book IV (around 1400). This edition is generally considered less reliant on le Bel, fuller and more original than the preceding versions.⁵⁸ The manuscripts of Book II (completed in 1387 - one later recension), Book III (completed between 1390 and

⁵⁷ See note 4 on p. 220 in Ainsworth, P.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990.

⁵⁸ Froissart, Jean: *Chronicles*. Trans. Geoffrey Brereton. London 1968. See 'Introduction' p. 25 and the discussions by Diller, Zink and Ainsworth.

1392) and Book IV (completed around 1400) contain relatively minor differences among them.⁵⁹

As already mentioned, Peter F. Ainsworth and George T. Diller have argued that the Rome manuscript version of Book I differs from the earlier redactions on several accounts, which could be relevant to the subject of this dissertation.⁶⁰ However, although there can be no doubt that making more extensive use of several of the different redactions could have provided insight into changes in Froissart's outlook and values, I have chosen to concentrate on the main text in the Société de l'Histoire de France edition of the three first books for the purposes of this analysis.⁶¹ Since the SHF edition is not complete, I have relied on the edition by Kervyn de Lettenhove for the study of the fourth book.⁶² I have also made use of the very recent 'Lettres Gothiques' edition of Book I and II of the *Chroniques* by Peter Ainsworth and George T. Diller⁶³ and Book III and IV by Peter Ainsworth and Alberto Varvaro.⁶⁴ It is my hope that these mixed source-references do not confuse my readership too much. Although I have enjoyed the support of Geoffrey Brereton's abbreviated translation into English,⁶⁵ the translations into English are mine if not otherwise stated.

⁵⁹ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. p. 38.

⁶⁰ Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 254. and Diller, George T.: *Attitudes chevaleresques et Réalités politiques chez Froissart. Microlectures du premier livres des Chroniques*. Genève 1984.

⁶¹ See note 1. p. 1. of this dissertation.

⁶² Froissart, J.: *Oeuvres de Froissart*. ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove. Osnabruck 1967. Tome XV and XVI. Hereafter abbreviated Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome et page. I have relied on this edition of Book IV because the SHF edition has not been complete.

⁶³ Froissart, Jean: *Chroniques. Livres I et II*. eds. Peter Ainsworth and George T. Diller. Paris 2001. Hereafter abbreviated *Chroniques. Livre I et I*. Livre et §. At the time when I started my work on Froissart's *Chroniques* this edition was not yet published.

⁶⁴ Froissart, Jean: *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. eds. Peter Ainsworth and Alberto Varvaro. Paris 2004. Hereafter abbreviated *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. Livre et §.

⁶⁵ Froissart, Jean: *Chronicles*. Trans. Geoffrey Brereton. London 1968.

1.3. Some methodological considerations

As related above, Froissart's stated goal at the beginning of his chronicles was to relate and preserve for posterity 'matère et exemples' to encourage brave men to honourable enterprise.⁶⁶ These 'brave' men, we must assume, were primarily members of the contemporary nobility and Froissart's work gained wide popularity. His work was found in the libraries of several prominent contemporary aristocrats including his various patrons, amongst them Jean de Hainault, Queen Philippa of England, the duke Wenesclas of Brabant and Guy, count of Blois.⁶⁷ However, according to Philippe Contamine, Froissart wrote for the whole chivalrous class, not just kings, princes and great magnates who could afford his costly illuminated manuscripts.⁶⁸

Froissart's account is rarely biased in favour of knights of a specific party or nationality. On the contrary, the author's 'prime concern seems to be impartial, in the chivalrous sense of the word, towards those whose deeds of prowess fill his pages', says Ainsworth.⁶⁹ Still, his ambition to entertain, inform and please his aristocratic audience may have had wide implications when it comes to the presentation of

⁶⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome II. Prologue.

⁶⁷ Froissart describes his relationship with Guy at the end of the chronicles: 'Je en ay fait mention pour ce que ce conte Guy de Bloys mist en grant entente en son temps que je sire Jean Froissart voulsisse ordonner et ditter ceste histoire, et moult luy cousta de ses deniers; car on ne pourroit parachiéver et continuer une si longue narration, que ce ne soit à moult grant paine et à grans coustages.' Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 71.

⁶⁸ Contamine, Philippe: 'Froissart: Art Militaire, pratique et conception de la Guerre' in Palmer, J. J. N., ed.: *Froissart: Historian*. Woodbridge 1981. pp. 132 - 34.

⁶⁹ See discussion of this in Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 31.

events and actions.⁷⁰ Adapting his account to the expectations and tastes of his public, their *horizon d'attente*,⁷¹ Froissart may at times have changed what he must have known to be the objective truth about an event or a person in order to make a moral point or to celebrate the implicit values in the recorded event or sequence of actions. We may also find that events or actions may have been omitted in order not to detract from the hero's or the collective's honour. 'A la limite, il s'agit d'une sorte de falsification consciente de la réalité pour permettre de laisser croire aux chevaliers que leur vie se déroule conformément à un schéma réunissant l'idéal chrétien et l'honneur des hommes d'armes', says Pierre Tucco-Chala.⁷²

As a result we cannot draw entirely reliable conclusions about actual behaviour or events on the basis of a reading of the *Chroniques*. Instead, one can obtain an understanding of how a chronicler writing primarily for an aristocratic audience explained and portrayed human behaviour and historical events. Although some of the actions and events portrayed and presented as 'truthful' may have been invented, modified and constructed, Froissart's narrative is authentic in the sense that the descriptions give reliable insight into the values and ideals the author wanted to propagate. By portraying what he perceives as glorious deeds or wrongful action, Froissart reveal the virtues, abilities and behaviour he admired and the actions and qualities he perceived as low, undignified, reprehensible and shameful. 'On these, . . . the *Chronicles*, communicate to us directly . . . the voices and

⁷⁰ See Froissart's own discussion of this in Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XIV. 1- 3.

⁷¹ Jauss, Hans Robert: *Pour une esthétique de la réception*; traduit de l'allemand par Claude Maillard; préface de Jean Starobinski. Paris 1978. pp. 49 - 55. 'Le système de références objectivement formulable qui, pour chaque oeuvre au moment de l'histoire où elle apparaît, résulte de trois facteurs principaux: l'expérience préalable que le public a du genre dont elle relève, la forme et la thématique d'oeuvres antérieures dont elle présuppose la connaissance, et l'opposition entre langage poétique et langage pratique, monde imaginaire et réalité quotidienne'.

⁷² Tucco-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 33.

emotions of the fourteenth century', says George T. Diller in 'Patrons and Texts' in *Froissart: Historian*.⁷³

1.4. Some considerations on causality and 'explanation'

Although some have claimed Froissart's accomplishment to be mediocre, it may, on the other hand, be argued that Froissart was far too observant and reflective to be a good source for more widespread ideas and attitudes.⁷⁴ Albert T'Serstevens, for instance, says that he finds Froissart closer to us than other medieval authors 'par le mouvement du style, par l'originalité de la composition, par l'intimité de ses portraits, par la poésie de ses descriptions, par le tour des anecdotes et le naturel du dialogue'.⁷⁵

According to Mark Phillips, the historical writing of the Middle Ages was a mere 'representation' of the past, while the more complex historical texts of the Renaissance were aimed at 'explaining'.⁷⁶ What the medieval historian only 'presented', the Renaissance historian would 'organize' and 'analyse', a sign of the

⁷³ Diller, George. T.: 'Froissart: Patrons and Texts' in *Froissart: Historian*. Woodbridge 1981. p. 153.

⁷⁴ In Peter Ainsworth's view, some of the textual developments in Froissart's text have no true counterpart in any of the historical works produced by his contemporaries. Consequently, they offer us a strong criterion for a (pertinent) contrast between his work and that of other fourteenth-century historiographers, he says. However, Ainsworth also argues that they do not offer us this contrast in terms of a convenient opposition between, on the one hand, one gifted 'historian' and a collection of mere 'chroniclers' on the other. Instead, one should say instead that Froissart's *Chroniques* embodies a textual richness that is unique. See Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. pp. 49 - 50.

⁷⁵ T'Serstevens, Albert.: *Escales parmi les livres*. Paris 1969. p. 75.

⁷⁶ Phillips, Mark: 'Representation and Argument in Florentine Historiography'. *Storia delle storiografia*, 10 .1986. pp. 48 – 63.

latter's more modern outlook and mentality.⁷⁷ Phillip's view on the historical writing of the Middle Ages is in accordance with the opinion set forward by William Brandt in the *Shape of Medieval History* where he specifically includes Froissart's work in his general categorisation. Here Brandt argues that the aristocratic narrative sources of the Middle Ages are marked by the fact that they habitually report the events in the most elementary relationship to each other.⁷⁸ Events are either juxtaposed without an explicit relationship or they are conjoined in the simple relationship indicated by the connectives 'and' and 'then', or more occasionally 'so', 'after' and 'when'. A modern historical narrative is based on a conviction that meaning lies within the relationships between the events, says Brandt. Through an examination of the causal processes behind the events modern historians answer questions like 'How did such-and-such come to be?' or 'Why is it that . . .?' However, the connectives most often used by authors of medieval aristocratic narratives lack causal force and cannot explain anything. This, because the relationships these words establish are limited and purely temporal.⁷⁹ To attempt to get at the 'how' of an event was totally alien to the medieval aristocratic historian, says Brandt. Instead 'his attention was monopolized by that other serious human concern, values.'⁸⁰

Bernard Guenée, however, in an essay on the various genres of historical writing in the Middle Ages, does not agree that the lack of 'causality' or 'explanation' in medieval historical-writing was due to the authors lack of ability to explain, but

⁷⁷ This is a view also set forward by Hayden White's who claims that the historical texts of the Middle Ages could be replaced by proper historical narrative only when a sense of public order in the modern state prevailed, providing a 'subject' for narrative representation. See White, Hayden: *The Content of the Form*. Ch.1. 'The value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality.' Baltimore 1987. Originally published in *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1. 1980.

⁷⁸ Brandt, W.: *The Shape of Medieval History*. New Haven 1966. p. 86.

⁷⁹ Brandt, W.: *The Shape of Medieval History*. New Haven 1966. p. 87.

⁸⁰ Brandt, W. J. : *The Shape of Medieval History*. New Haven 1966. p. 106.

because their audience did not expect it: 'Si les historiens de ce temps s'en sont tenus à un simple récit narratif et ne se sont pour ainsi dire jamais risqués à un récit explicatif, ce n'est pas que les relations causales leur échappassent ou qu'ils fussent tous de médiocres esprits, c'est que, sauf exception, les meilleurs d'entre eux se résignaient à être historiens au sens où leurs contemporains l'entendaient,' says Guenée.⁸¹

Froissart predominately presents the events he relates chronologically, and as Brandt has pointed out, many of the paragraphs start with words and sentences like 'Ouant', 'Or advint', 'Après', 'En ce temps' or ' Nous retournerons', that serve to place the related events in time. However, contrary to Brandt's finding there are also several paragraphs in Froissart's work that open with words and sentences with far more explanatory force, for instance 'Adonc', 'Ensi' (or Ainsi) or 'Vous savez'. These clearly points to a causal relationship between paragraphs and other events. In addition, the narrative is marked by a technique that Michel Zink calls *l'entrelacement*, 'un procédé de composition . . . qui consiste à mener de front et à raconter alternativement les aventure de plusieurs personnages: "A présent le conte cesse de parler de X et revient à Y. Vous avez entendu comment Y avait fait ceci ou cela . . .'. This technique, says Zink, permits Froissart to bring forth series of events, which meet and part, only to meet again later. In the meantime they influence each other, sometimes directly, at other times indirectly.⁸²

According to Pierre Tucco-Chala, Froissart had his own distinct vision of history. Except for those of Jean Le Bel, previous chronicles had been simple compilations of

⁸¹ Guenée, B.: 'Histoires, annales, chroniques. Essai sur les genres historiques au Moyen Age', *Annales-Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 28. 1973. p. 1010.

⁸² Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. p. 51. 'Ce procédé permet de faire entrer en résonance diverses séries d'événements qui se rencontrent, divergent, se croisent à nouveau plus loin, influent les unes sur les autre tantôt directement, tantôt de très loin à travers toute une cascade d'intermédiaires.'

vaguely connected events: 'simple éphémérides mettant bout à bout des indications brutes'.⁸³ Contrary to these Froissart takes care to create a continual narration in chronological order, and he also attempts to capture the reader with literary effects and 'une progression savante', says Tucco-Chala. Zink, like Tucco-Chala, believes that Froissart treats the historical 'matère' he relates in his *Chroniques* in a manner far more complex than we may find in many other contemporary works,⁸⁴ and attempts to unveil causes and effects by combining what Zink calls 'plan logique et plan chronologique'. In Peter Ainsworth's opinion, Froissart, the chronicler, is to be understood, above all, in terms of his search of the moral truth behind the events he writes about. 'Without being a moralist in the fullest sense, (Froissart's) history-writing surely approximates to an attempt to "get at" the motivations behind human behaviour, as he perceives them', he says.⁸⁵

As we will see in the following, there can be no doubt that Zink and Ainsworth are right to argue that Froissart is indeed able to explain the causes and effects of various events, in addition to celebrating the actions of individuals. His originality and ability to 'explain', does not, however, in my opinion, make his account less suitable as a guide to the moral universe, ideals and values of the author and his audience. In *German Historiography from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, Sverre Bagge argues that

⁸³ Tucco-Chala, Pierre.: 'Froissart, le grand reporter du Moyen Age', *L'Histoire* 44. 1982. pp. 52 - 63. Also see 'Froissart dans le Midi pyrénéen' in Palmer ed.: *Froissart. Historian*. 1981.

⁸⁴ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. p. 50. ' . . . dans sa volonté de dégager les effets et les causes, Froissart, combine plan logique et plan chronologique (à la différence de la composition annalistique, qui est encore d' une certaine façon celle des *Grandes chroniques de France*, celle du religieux de Saint-Denis, Michel Pinton, pour toute sa subtilité que Bernard Guenée a si bien mise en évidence).' The aim to reveal causes and effects and combine 'plan logique et plan chronologique,' is something which according to Zink, becomes more and more apparent as Froissart's work progresses: '(Dans) les livres III et IV . . . un troisième paramètre - l'ordre de l'enquête - vient se combiner aux deux autres (l'ordre de causes et l'ordre des événements).

⁸⁵ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 306.

the originality and quality of a work does not necessarily mean that it cannot be used to study more general attitudes and mentality. On the contrary, 'great works . . . often make explicit what is implicit or difficult to trace in more average texts,' he says.⁸⁶ According to Bagge, these 'great works' are also better if we want to study change and originality in the intellectual field.

One may, nevertheless, argue that Froissart, the product of the merchant middle class of Valenciennes in Hainault,⁸⁷ did not necessarily express the values of the aristocracy in the same manner as for instance his contemporary, Geoffroy de Charny, who wrote his book on chivalry based on his own experience as a knight and magnate.⁸⁸ It should for instance be noted that contrary to writers like for instance Georges Chastellain, chronicler of the fifteenth-century Burgundian Court, who says little or nothing about 'the estate of the good towns, of merchants and labouring men',⁸⁹ Froissart relates what he believed were the opinions of burghers and even peasants several times in his account, although not, as we shall see later, always in a very positive manner.⁹⁰ He also, on occasions, attributes positive qualities

⁸⁶ Bagge, Sverre: *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World in German Historiography c 950 - 1150*. Leiden 2002. p. 21.

⁸⁷ For an outline of Froissart's background see Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. p. 5 - 8.

⁸⁸ On Charny's work and life see Richard W. Kaeuper's Introduction to Elspeth Kennedy's translation of Charny's book: de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005.

⁸⁹ *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, Brussels, 1863-66. Chastellain says: 'It is not becoming to give such a long exposition (of this estate) as of the others, because it is hardly possible to attribute great qualities to them, as they are of a servile degree.' Huizinga analyzed Chastellain's narrative in the chapter 'The Hierarchic Conception of Society,' in his book *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth 1965.

⁹⁰ This is an observation in opposition to the conclusions drawn by Jean Giono. In *Tableau de la littérature Française*, Jean Giono claims Froissart's main aim was to produce a 'spectacle' for his patrons, presenting them with exactly what they wanted to see. Because of this, says Giono, Froissart does not see the people or the burghers. In my opinion, this is clearly not correct. See Giono, Jean: *Tableau de la littérature française*. Paris 1962. pp. 138 - 39.

to certain members of the *bourgeoisie*. However, if we consider the popularity of Froissart's work amongst the members of cosmopolitan upper class society it is hard to believe that the ideals he expresses in his work were contrary to what this group believed to be 'the right order of the world'.

In spite of the fact that merchants and the peasants were clearly not excluded from Froissart's mental universe, it also remains that his main focus is on the action and the deeds of noblemen and knights. And although he was not a knight himself, like de Charny, he had, as pointed out by his biographer Shears, long frequented the men who enact his story: 'He had heard their counsels and shared their life, at court, if not in camp'.⁹¹ That Froissart shared the mental and moral universe of his protagonists is an opinion also voiced by Peter Ainsworth. 'Froissart seems to have harboured the lifelong desire of crossing the threshold into the ranks of chivalry,' he says. 'His condition as a tonsured cleric rendered him more than suitable for the "office" of Secretary to the court of European Chivalry . . .'⁹²

Every member of late medieval aristocracy may not have shared the ideals and values found in Froissart's work. Still, I believe the link between the values and ideals he propagates and the mental universe of his aristocratic audience to be strong. The fact that his work was highly esteemed by prominent members of the aristocracy is seen in the author's portrayal of his meeting with Count Gaston of Fébus of Foix, a meeting further dealt with in the next chapter.

⁹¹ Shears, F.S.: *Froissart, Chronicler and Poet*. London 1930. p. 173.

⁹² Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 77.

2. The chivalrous ideal

In the Introduction we saw that Froissart states that one of the main goals of his historical narrative was to transmit chivalrous values to posterity.⁹³ Of special importance, he says, was the virtue 'prowess' - 'car c'est une si noble vertue et de si grant recommandation, . . . mère matérielle et lumière des gentils hommes.'⁹⁴ A nobleman who does not act with prowess, says Froissart, cannot achieve 'parfaite honneur' - 'perfect honour', which in addition to the 'glore dou monde' - esteem in the eyes of his peers, was the goal of a nobleman's activities. According to most modern historians of chivalry, like Maurice Keen, Georges Duby, Jean Flori, John Barnie and others, honour is of fundamental importance to an understanding of the chivalrous ethos.⁹⁵ However, according to Barnie, it is not enough to understand that gaining honour was of great importance to the members of the aristocracy. We also need to have a clear concept of what honour actually was. To dismiss the portrayals of extreme courtesy or bravery, as quixotic, foolish or bearing witness to 'chivalric excess', is to seriously misunderstand the aristocratic mind, he says.⁹⁶ Instead aristocratic narrative sources like Froissart's *Chroniques* should be re-examined in the light of the concept of honour.

⁹³ SHF Livre I. Tome II. Prologue. 'Or doivent donc tout jone gentil homme, qui se voellent avancier, avoir ardent desir d'acquiesce le fait et le renommée de proèce, par quoi il soient mis et compté ou nombre des preus, et regarder et considerer comment leur predicesseur, dont il tiennent leurs hyretages et portent espoir les armes, sont honnoré et recommandé par leurs bien fais.'

⁹⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome II. Prologue. Froissart continues: ' . . . et si la busce ne poet ardoir sans feu, ne poet li gentils homs venir à parfaite honneur, ne à gloire dou monde, sans proèce.'

⁹⁵ Barnie, J: *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. p. 75. 'The honourable man must demonstrate his honour continually before his peers, and this in turn often involves challenging the honour of others . . .'

⁹⁶ Barnie, J: *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. p. 79.

Barnie, in his otherwise eminent book on war and social values in late medieval society from 1974, relied on the definition of honour set forward by Julian Pitt-Rivers. However, more recently, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has proposed that we see honour as a kind of 'symbolic capital'.⁹⁷ In his analysis, Bourdieu outlines four different concepts of capital: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Common to all four forms of capital is that they are resources to be used within specific areas of human life. However, they are different in regards to their nature. The three first are fairly concrete and can, in a medieval aristocratic setting, be regarded as material wealth (castles, land, riches), social and familiar standing, cultural knowledge and networks. The last concept, symbolic capital, is different, however, because it relies on an understanding that 'capital' is not necessarily a fixed entity, but depending on the extent to which a group, in this case the medieval nobility, recognises something as valuable and of importance. As we have seen above, there can be no doubt that to have 'perfect honour' was of great importance to Froissart and his audience. This honour, we are to understand, could be gained or augmented by behaving in accordance with a particular set of values.

According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital is different from the other forms of capital, because we do not instantly see how it functions as a capital. This dimension is, however, clearly seen when people act in opposition to the ethical code or ideal; it leads to a loss of prestige, sometimes excluding the social actor from the group or community to which she belong, thus undermining the basis for her social and cultural capital, and in the end her economic capital as well. However, the ethical code -- what is perceived to be of 'importance' and 'value' -- will vary in time and space, and from community to community.

⁹⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre: *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge 1977. pp. 171 - 73 and *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge 1990. pp. 112 - 22.

The importance of having and obtaining honour in the aristocratic milieu of the Middle Ages is best understood when we look at how honour functions as a criterion. As we may see above, Froissart's opinion was that the good nobleman is he who pursues the quest for honour, or who actively tries to augment his symbolic capital. This is a view Froissart shares with several medieval aristocratic writers, who outline the importance of honour and the actions one should perform in order to obtain it, in their instructive works. *L'Arbre de Batailles* by Honoré Bonet,⁹⁸ for instance, is a work specifically aimed at making *le chevalier* know the right course of action in any circumstances, while Raymond Lulle in *Le livre de l'Ordre de la Chevalerie* written around 1275 outlines the origins and role of *chevalerie*, the qualifications needed for the perfect knight and how members of the nobility should treat each other honourably. According to Lulle, the primary purpose of the knight is to defend his lord, especially against attacks from lesser men: ' . . . le mauvais chevalier qui aide plutôt le peuple que son seigneur, ne suit pas l'office pour lequel il est appelé chevalier.'⁹⁹ Lulle's concept of honour is in keeping with Bourdieu's in the sense that he believes that the honour of a knight can be augmented by behaving in accordance with the guidelines he proposes. 'Pour l'honneur du chevalier', says Lulle, ' il convient qu'il soit aimé car il est bon; qu'il soit craint, car il est fort; qu'il soit loué, car il est faiseur du bien; qu'il soit prié, car il est intime et conseiller du seigneur.'¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Bonet, Honore: *The Tree of Battles of Honore Bonet*; ed. G. W. Coopland. Harvard 1949. *L'Arbre de Batailles* is a work aimed at making *le chevalier* know the right course of action in any circumstances. Here war is described as the personal conflict between two great seigneurs and the perfect knight, as Bonet describes him, should stay loyal, help paying the lord's ransom, and volunteer as a hostage.

⁹⁹ Lulle, Raymond: *Le Livre de l'Ordre de la Chevalerie*. Ed. Guy Trédaniel. Introduction, traduction et notes par Bruno Hapel. Paris 1990. pp. 28 - 29. Lulle mentions the following qualifications for a perfect knight; 'la justice, la sagesse, la charité, la loyauté, la vérité, l'humilité, la force, l'esperance, la célérité et les autres vertus semblables à celle-ci . . .'

¹⁰⁰ Lulle, Raymond: *Le Livre de l'Ordre de la Chevalerie*. Ed. Guy Trédaniel. Introduction, traduction et notes par Bruno Hapel. Paris 1990. pp. 75 - 77.

Although Lulle wrote at a time when he had left the practice of knighthood to become a quasi-friar, Lulle was himself a former knight who had experienced life both at court and in battle. This was also the case for Geoffroy de Charny who in 1350 - 51 wrote a chivalric treatise called *Le livre de chevalerie*¹⁰¹ for the Company of the Star, the new chivalric order of his king, John the Good. De Charny was a celebrated French knight, admired for his accomplishments in jousts and tournaments, for having taken the cross in 1345 and for having been active in most of the major campaigns against the English. He was killed in the battle of Poitiers where he was King John's standard-bearer. In his work de Charny, similarly to Froissart, advances the principle that prowess is an essential chivalric trait and leads to honour - 'the highest human good'. The author also points to the connection between honour and other worldly rewards when he states that knights performing with honour also 'gained recognition, rise in status, profit, riches and increase in all benefits'.¹⁰² The greatest honour, according to Charny, could be won by never fleeing from a battle.

In the introduction to a new, translated edition of Charny's text, Richard W. Kaeuper, says that it is important for students of chivalry to avoid both scholarly and popular misconceptions about the chivalrous ideal.¹⁰³ Medieval chivalry was a highly serious code, he says, and was in no sense frivolous or ephemeral, concerned

¹⁰¹ de Charny, Geoffroi: *Le livre de chevalerie*. The English translation by Elspeth Kennedy is based on two French manuscripts: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique: 1124 - 26, FF 83 - 136; and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouvelle acquisitions française, 4736, ff 36 -87. See pp. 41 - 42 in de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005.

¹⁰² de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. p. 59.

¹⁰³ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. pp. 1 - 3.

only with a few outward forms of social life. If we want to understand chivalry as it functioned in the Middle Ages, says Kaeuper, we must demolish the structures, many of them venerably Victorian, which stand in the way, and start with sound medieval evidence. According to Kaeuper, Charny's book on chivalry is a gold mine in this respect, because it reveals where a thoughtful model knight stands in the vigorous medieval debate over chivalry.¹⁰⁴

Although Froissart was not a knight like de Charny, we may expect his text too, to provide information about chivalrous ideals and values, for instance in his portrayal of the Count of Foix, Gaston Fébus¹⁰⁵ and other men whom he clearly admired.

2.1. Froissart's aristocratic ideal and his meeting with Gaston Fébus

Froissart arrived at Orthez, at the court of Gaston III Fébus, count of Foix, seigneur souverain of Béarn, viscount of Marsan, Gabradan, Nébouzan, Lautrec and the Terres-basses d'Albigeois and co-seigneur of Andorra from 1343 to 1391, on the 25th of November 1388. The chronicler stayed at the Count's court at Orthez for around twelve weeks, and the information he received there gave him most of the material

¹⁰⁴ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. p. 16.

¹⁰⁵ Gaston Fébus of Foix (1331-1391), Count of Foix from 1343. Gaston Fébus was, as we shall see, a clever administrator and made the county of Foix one of the most influential and powerful domains in France. In 1345, early in the Hundred Years War, Gaston fought against the English and in 1347 was named special lieutenant general in southern France. Suspected of conspiring against France with his brother-in-law, Charles II the Bad, king of Navarre, he was imprisoned in 1356. When he was released he left to fight the pagans in Prussia. In 1358, after his return to France, he saved some members of the royal family as they were besieged in the marketplace of Meaux during the peasant revolt called the Jacquerie. In 1380 Gaston Fébus was named lieutenant general of Languedoc by Charles V of France, but upon the latter's death that same year he lost the position to the Duke de Berry. Enraged, Gaston defeated the Duke in combat and then retired to his mountain estates. For a comprehensive overview of the life of Gaston Fébus of Béarn, see Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident*. Pau 1976 and *Gaston Fébus. Prince des Pyrénées (1331 - 1391)*. Anglet 1993.

for the third book of his chronicles, a book many see as the most accomplished part of his work.¹⁰⁶ When Froissart left for the court of Gaston Fébus in 1388, he was in the service of the count Guy of Blois, and in the prologue to the third book, the author states his mission clearly; he wanted to go as far as Béarn in order to gain knowledge of the affaires of the Iberian peninsula.¹⁰⁷ But in addition to relating these important events, Froissart was able to give his readers a portrait of one of the most renowned knights of his time. 'Le plus grand chroniqueur de langue française du XIVE siècle trouva sur les bord du gave à Orthez un homme assez proche de ce prince idéal dont il cherchait l'existence à travers toutes les cours occidentales,' says Pierre Tucoo-Chala.¹⁰⁸

But the stay at Orthez was not only advantageous for the chronicler and his work. The Count, in Froissart's description, was very pleased to have encountered the author, who at this point had gained some reputation for his work.¹⁰⁹ 'Il était de surcroit un très grand ecrivain, perfectionnant sans cesse son art pour arriver à sa

¹⁰⁶ Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident*. Pau 1976. pp. 121 - 41.

¹⁰⁷ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. § 1. pp. 91 - 92. 'Et là fu enfourmez de la greigneur partie des besoignes qui estoient avenues ou royaume de Castile, ou royaume de Portingal, ou royaume de Navarre, ou royaume d' Arragon et ou royaume d'Engleterre, ou pays Bourdelois et en toute la Gascoingne. . . . Ainsi fu je en l'ostel du noble conte de Foiz requeillis et nourris à ma plaisance, ce estoit ce que je desirroie, à enquerre toutes nouvelles touchans à ma matiere. Et je avoie prestz à la main barons, chevaliers et escuiers qui m'enfourmerent, et li gentil conte de Fois aussi. Si vous voudray esclarcir par beau langaige tout ce dont je fuz adonc enfourmez, pour rengrossier nostre matiere et pour exemplier les bons qui se desirent à avancier par armes, car se ci dessus j'ay prologué grans faiz d'armes, prinses et assaulx de villes et de chastaulx, batailles adreciees et durs rencontres, encores en trouverez vous ensuivant grant foison, des quelles et desquelz par la grace de Dieu je feray bonne et juste enarracion.'

¹⁰⁸ Tucoo- Chala: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident*. Pau 1976. p. 220.

¹⁰⁹ *Chroniques. Livre III et IV*. § 1. p. 91. 'Le quel conte de Fois, si trestost comme il me vit, me fist bonne chiere et me dist en riant, en bon françois, que bien il me congnoissoit, et si ne m'avoit onques maiz veu, mais pluseurs foyz avoit bien ouy parler de moy.'

maturité au moment de la rédaction de son Livre III,' says Pierre Tucoo-Chala.¹¹⁰ Froissart claims that he was warmly welcomed and invited to participate in the activities of the court.¹¹¹ He presented the Count with his *roman* Méliador and was, according to his own testimony, allowed to recite from it every evening. Fébus on his side was probably flattered by the great interest Froissart demonstrated in his life and the government of his realm and wanted to be portrayed in way that celebrated his deeds and qualities.¹¹² All in all, the author's stay at Gaston Fébus's court clearly left a long-lasting impression, and from what we can gather, Gaston Fébus of Foix was the embodiment of all the great qualities the author hoped to find in a prince:

Le conte Gaston de Fois dont je parole, en ce temps que je fu devers lui, avoit environ cinquante neuf ans d'aage. Et vous di que je ay en mon temps veu moult de chevaliers, roys, princes et autres, mais je n'en vi onques nul qui feust de si beaux membres, de si belle fourme ne de si belle taille: viaire bel, sanguin et riant, les yeux vairs et amoureux là où il lui plaisoit son regart getter. De toutes choses il estoit si tres parfait que on ne le pourroit trop louer. Il amoit ce que il devoit amer et haitoit ce qu'il devoit haïr. Saiges chevalier estoit et de haulte emprinse, et plain de bon conseil. Il n' eust onques nul mescreant avecques lui. Il fu preudons en regner.

¹¹⁰ Tucoo- Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident*. Pau 1976. p. 122. 'Ce fut une chance supplémentaire pour Fébus, il rencontra un homme en pleine possession de son talent et au sommet de sa carrière.'

¹¹¹ *Chroniques. Livre III et IV*. § 1. p. 91. 'Si me retint de son hostel et tout aise, avecques le bon moien des lettres que je lui avoie aportees, tant que il m'y plot à estre . . . Et je meismes, quant je lui demandoie aucune chose, il le me disoit moult volentiers. Et me disoit bien que l'histoire que je avoie fait et persuiuvoie seroit ou temps à avenir plus recommandee que nulle autre.'

¹¹² 'This warm welcome seems to have augmented the chronicler's self-confidence in his role as Secretary of Chivalry', says Peter Ainsworth. Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 143.

Il disoit planté d'oroisons, tous les jours: une nocturne du psaultier, heures de Nostre Dame, du Saint Esperit, de la Croix, et vigilles de mors. Tous les jours faisoit donner .v. francs en petite monnoie pour l'amour de Dieu, et l' aumosne à sa porte à toutes gens. Il fu larges et courtois en dons, et trop bien savoit prendre où il appartenoit, et remettre où il afferoit. Les chiens sur toutes bestes il amoit, et aux champs, esté et yver, aux chaces volontiers estoit. D'armes et d'amours volontiers se desduisoit . . . Il prenoit grant esbatement en menestraudie, car bien s'i congnoissoit. Il faisoit devant lui ses clers volentiers chanter chançons, rondiaux et virelaiz . . . ¹¹³

As we may see above, Froissart's description of Gaston Fébus starts with a physical portrait, one of very few in the chronicles.¹¹⁴ Fébus, says Froissart, was the best-looking man he had ever encountered. However, in spite of this, the description is rather limited and drawn in the usual eulogistic style of the age, speaking of his features in general praising terms.¹¹⁵ With the exception of his eye-colour, none of the characteristics mentioned above would make it possible to distinguish Fébus

¹¹³ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* Livre III. § 13. pp. 174 - 77.

¹¹⁴ None of the famous kings and princes, like Edward III, John le Bon or the Black Prince are described by Froissart.

¹¹⁵ The Middle Ages had inherited from classical oratory a scheme governing panegyric which was frequently applied to the praise of contemporary kings and heroes. The topics appropriate to panegyric are conveniently summarized in *De inventione* where Cicero identifies eleven attributes which may be developed for purposes of praise and blame. These are: name, nature, manner of life, fortune habit, feeling, interests, purposes, achievements, accidents, and speeches. Together they provide a *schema*, which attempts to formalize all significant aspects of a man's life. See Cicero: *De inventione*, ed. and trans. H. Hubbell. 1949.

from other good-looking noblemen of the age.¹¹⁶ The purpose seems to have been to integrate Gaston Fébus in the physical ideal of the time; to create a picture of a charismatic chivalrous hero, a man other men would admire and obey.

Thomas of Walsingham for instance, in his work *Historia Anglicana*, describes Edward III as 'elegant of body, as his height neither exceeded that which was seemly nor yielded overmuch to shortness.' In addition, the king 'had countenance like an angel', says Walsingham, 'the more venerable for its human mortality, in which shone forth such extraordinary beauty that if anyone had openly looked upon his countenance or dreamed of it by night, he would without doubt hope for delightful solace to befall him that day.'¹¹⁷ 150 years before Walsingham the author of *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* claimed that William Marshal was a man with 'limbs so well proportioned that he who made him must have been an artist'.¹¹⁸ 'He had dark hair and a handsome face, says the author and 'his posture could have belonged to a Roman Emperor. He was broad-shouldered and was as well turned out as one could be . . . ' As we may see, all three authors not only describe the physical characteristics of their heroes, but also enhance the positive message by comparing them to angels, Roman emperors, works of art and in Froissart's case, other men.

¹¹⁶ According to Tucoo-Chala, Gaston Fébus had 'une opulente chevelure blonde qu'il laissait toujours flotter au vent', but even this very distinguishable trait, is not mentioned by the chronicler. See Tucoo-Chala: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siecle*. Pau 1976. p. 8.

¹¹⁷ Barnie, J: *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. Appendix. pp. 139 - 145.

¹¹⁸ Meyer, Paul, ed.: *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Strigeuil et de Pembroke*. Societé de l'Histoire de France, (SHF) no. 255, 268. Paris 1891-1901. Hereafter abbreviated HGM. Verses 714 – 736.

One peculiar exception to this praising of the hero's beauty is Cuvelier's *Chanson de Bertrand Du Guesclin*,¹¹⁹ written around the same time as Froissart was working on his chronicles. Here Cuvelier emphatically describes the physical appearance of the young Bertrand as the ugliest child from Rennes to Dinan; 'Flat nosed and dark, gross and uncouth . . .'¹²⁰ According to Richard Vernier, du Guesclin's recent biographer, the *Chanson de Bertrand Du Guesclin* seems to be our first textual source for the enduring theme of Bertrand's ugliness.¹²¹ However, in this particular case, Vernier believes that the heavy emphasis on Bertrand's appearance serves a specific purpose, 'that of introducing the motif of the Ugly Duckling. Or more to the point, of the Diamond-in-the-Rough . . .'¹²²

However, with the exception of Cuvelier's description of du Guesclin, a beautiful and athletic exterior was a natural part of the hero's physical attributes in medieval

¹¹⁹ See *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*. ed. by Jean-Claude Faucon. Préface de Philippe Ménard. Three volumes, including Text, Critical Introduction, Variants, Notes, Glossary and Index. Toulouse. Éditions Universitaires du Sud. 1990 - 3. Hereafter abbreviated *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin*. Verses.

¹²⁰ See Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. pp. 20 - 22. 'Whether or not he sat still long enough to pose for one, no contemporary life portrait of du Guesclin has reached us,' says Vernier. On the monuments in Saint-Denis and in Le Puy, both reputed to be good likenesses, the short stature and disproportionately broad shoulders are noticeable; but this is after all the physique developed by a man who has spent more than forty of his sixty years swinging the battle axe', says Vernier. Although the facial features are anything but delicate, they are not much coarser than those, for instance, of the royal Duke of Berry, he states. When comparing the face of his *gisant* in the royal necropolis of Saint-Denis, Vernier finds him, if not handsome, at least healthy comparison with those of his neighbours and masters, Charles V and his Queen. Indeed if Bertrand's features are compared, not to some synthetic ideal of aristocratic countenance, he says, but to existing contemporary portraits, it is hard to understand what all the fuss was about.

¹²¹ The common folks of Bordeaux is said to have called Du Guesclin 'an ugly peasant, with a gross body and ferocious face'. *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*. Verses 14598 - 14605.

¹²² In *L' Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, the author relates how it was said that the young Marshal did nothing but sleep, eat and drink while staying at the Count of Tancarville's house in Normandy. "What's the use of this big-eater?" people said to each other. . . He (the Count of Tancarville) listened smilingly and said: "He will do just fine! . . . You do not know who I am feeding here!". See HGM Verses 768 - 804.

literature, something which can be explained by the fact that 'beautiful' often meant 'good' or 'worthy'. A handsome appearance was therefore taken as the visible proof of a good character, a sign of the hero's moral standing. Alternatively, when Froissart describes the peasants of the French popular revolt, *La Jaquerie*, he calls them 'villains – small and dark' thus, indicating an actual physical difference between 'good' and 'bad' men.¹²³ 'In a feudal society where class distinctions had all the virulence of racial prejudice, fair hair and skin, tall, straight bodies and well-proportioned limbs were the stock characteristics of the aristocracy,' says Richard Vernier, and opinion Froissart seems to have shared.¹²⁴

The literary and cultural tradition, and the society of the later Middle Ages, also led to an admiration of war and qualities referring to the noble's function as a warrior - his *prohess* - skills and boldness in armed conflict. Also Gaston Fébus took pleasure in arms, as we may see from the portrayal above. However, Froissart had already described Fébus' prowess before he came to Orthez - in Book I of his chronicles. The French defeat at Poitiers, related by Froissart in Book I, had led to a veritable internal economical crisis and a breakdown in justice. This led to popular uprisings, especially amongst the peasants of the Beauvaisis and large parts of the Ile de France.¹²⁵ The rebels were called *Jaques*.¹²⁶ In a passage relating the events of this

¹²³ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 416. 'ces villains noirs et petis et mal armés . . .' Whether this was based on real physical differences is not certain, but as far as Froissart saw it the difference between the social classes was not only a matter of different clothing, speech and behaviour. There was also a genuine physical difference, distinguishing the men who were born to rule from the men whose destiny it was to be subjects.

¹²⁴ Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. p. 20. 'Peasants had to be content with coarse features and tanned skin, lumpy bodies, simian arms and bandy legs,' says Vernier and points to the description of the *vilain* in the thirteenth-century romance *Aucassin and Nicolette*.

¹²⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 415.

¹²⁶ See discussion in Tucoo-Chala: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XiVe siecle*. Pau 1976. p. 30. 'The name *Jaques* came from the name Jaques Bonhomme given to peasants in

uprising, Froissart describes the role of Gaston Fébus in the fight against the *Jacques* where he saved several noble ladies, amongst them the duchess of Orléans, the wife of the dauphin, the future Charles V, from the attack of the armed peasants.¹²⁷

When Gaston Fébus, together with his cousin, the Captal de Buch,¹²⁸ met the *Jacques*, on their way home from Prussia, the Count's force, according to Froissart, was made up of no more than forty lances.¹²⁹ Still, they managed to kill more than seven thousand of the men who 'had performed dreadful calamities and filled the nobility with horror'.¹³⁰ When confronted by noblemen the *Jacques* proved to be cowards, says Froissart, who portrays the *Jacques* as fearing the blows of lances and swords.

France, whence the Jaquerie. The name is thought to derive from jacque (a jerkin) considered as the peasants' distinctive wear, though a garment of that name was worn by Edward III at Winchelsea and by Bolingbroke on the eve of his coronation - in the second case made of cloth-of-gold', says Brereton. See Froissart, Jean: *Chronicles*. Trans. Geoffrey Brereton. London 1968. p. 476.

¹²⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 415 - 16. The main focus of the participants in the *Jaquerie* was, according to Froissart, to destroy the nobles, knights and squires who had disgraced and betrayed the realm, and the barbarous acts that followed were 'worse than anything that ever took place between Christians and Saracens'. Noblemen and their families were killed, says Froissart who, in spite of claiming that he could not bring himself to write about the things that happened to the noble ladies, gives a few very detailed accounts of the fate of some unlucky noblemen. In this fearful situation several noblemen and their ladies were forced to flee and an international force of noblemen was gathered in order to regain control of the situation.

¹²⁸ The Captal de Buch, relative of Gaston Fébus was a Gascon nobleman and thus, 'English'. But although the Captal was English, says Froissart, the truce between England and France made it possible for him to go wherever he wanted in France, and in order to 'give proof of his knightly qualities' he decided to join the Count in his fight against the 'villains'. The Count and the Captal de Buch were bound together by kinship and by having fought together in Prussia, a fact attesting to the complex familiar and social connections between the Anglo-French nobility.

¹²⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 415 - 16. 'Si pooient estre de leur route environ quarante lances et non plus, car il venoient d'un pelerinage, ensi que je vous ay jà dit.'

¹³⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 415 - 16. 'Adonc issirent toutes manières de gens d'armes hors des barrières et gagnèrent tantost le place et se boutèrent entre ces meschans gens; si les abatoient à fous et à mons et les tuoient ensi que bestes, et les reboutèrent tout hors de le ville que onques nulz d'yaus n'i eut ordenance ne conroi. Et en tuèrent tant qu'il en estoient tout lassé et tout tané, et les fasoient sallir à mons en le rivièrre de Marne. Briefment, il en tuèrent ce jour que misent à fin plus de sept mil; ne jà n'en fust nulz escapés, se il les volsissent avoir caciés plus avant.'

Not one would have escaped if Gaston Fébus and his men had not grown tired of pursuing them, the author claims.

In Froissart's account, positively evaluated kings and magnates are all portrayed as being able to stand their ground in man-to-man combat. When describing the first battles of Edward III Froissart makes a point of describing him as a very competent warrior and a noble knight of his own hand,¹³¹ for instance in an attack upon Calais where the young English King fought incognito under the banner of Sir Walter Manny.¹³² In the fierce encounter Edward III singled out Eustache de Ribeaumont who, according to Froissart, was the 'most formidable' of the French knights. They fought together for a long time, he says, and although many knights proved themselves, Eustache was the best knight and twice struck the King to his knees. Finally the French were vanquished and the King captured Eustache who surrendered his sword and said: 'Knight, I give myself up to you'. Although Eustache finally had to give in, his honour was not diminished by his defeat. Apparently, in Froissart's opinion, both men won symbolic capital by their actions, even the one who was defeated.

Although Edward III and his son, Edward the Black Prince, are probably the men portrayed most in keeping with the traditional martial virtues of the time, the

¹³¹ SHF Livre I. Tome II. § 115: 'La fu li rois d'Engleterre, de sa main très bons chevaliers, car il estoit adonc en le fleur de se jonée.'

¹³² SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 319. 'Là eut grant estour et dur et bien combatu. Et y furent et François et Englès, cescuns en son couvenant, très bons chevaliers. Là eut fait plusieurs grans apertises d'armes. Et ne s'i espargna li rois d'Engleterre noient, mès estoit toutdis entre les plus drus; et eut de le main ce jour le plus à faire à monsieur Ustasse de Ribeumont. Là fus ses filz, li jones princes de Galles, très bons chevaliers. Et fu li rois abatus en jenoulz, si com je fuis infourmés, par deux fois, dou dessus dit monsieur Ustasse . . . La journée demora pour les Englès . . . Et bien veoit messires Ustasses ossi que rendre ou mourir le couvenoit. Si bailla au roy sen espée et li dist: "Chevaliers je me rens vostre prisonnier". Et li rois le prist qui en eut grant joie.'

French king captured at Poitiers, John the Good, is also portrayed as possessing his fair share of martial abilities. According to Froissart the King of France never showed dismay at anything he saw or heard reported and remained on the field at Poitiers from beginning to end, like a brave knight and stout fighter. He had shown his determination never to retreat when he commanded his men to fight on foot, says Froissart, and having made them dismount, he did the same and stood in the forefront of them with a battle-axe in his hands, ordering forward his banners in the name of God and St. Denis.¹³³ Although John was eventually vanquished, the author never reproaches him for the negative outcome of the battle. On the contrary, Froissart remarks that if a quarter of his men had resembled John the day would have been his. We will return to Froissart's account of the campaign and battle of Poitiers in the next chapter.

Froissart's focus on prowess and lack of bias when relating deeds of war is also seen in his description of the battle of Najera in April 1367 where Pedro the Cruel of Castile, supported by the English and Gascon forces of the Black Prince, met the forces of Pedro's illegitimate half-brother Enrique of Trastamara, supported by the French.¹³⁴ Although clearly impressed by the victorious Black Prince and the feats of arms performed by his men, Froissart also relates the courage of the opponent,

¹³³ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 388. '... on ne poet pas dire ne presumer que li rois Jehans de France s'effreast onques pour cose que il oist ne veist; mès demora et fu toutdis bons chevaliers et bien combatants, et ne moustra pas samblant de fuir ne de reculer, quant il dist à ses hommes: A piet! A piet! et fist descendre tous chiaus qui à cheval estoient. Et il meismes se mist à piet devant tous les siens, une hace de guerre en ses mains, et fit passer avant ses banières ou nom de Dieu et de saint Denis, dont messires Joffrois de Chagni portoit la souverainne ...'

¹³⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 583. 'La bataille et la route, qui fu le mieulz combatue et plus entettement, ce fu ceste de monsieur Bertran de Claiekin; car là estoient droites gens d'armes qui se combatoient et vendoient à leur loyal pooir, et là furent faites plusieurs grans apertises d'armes. Et par especial, messires Jehans Chandos y fu très bons chevaliers, et consilla et gouvrena ce jour le duch de Lancastre en tel manière comme il fist jadis son frère le prince de Galles, à le bataille de Poitiers, de quoi il fu moult honnourés et recommandés, ce fu bien raisons, car un vaillant homme et bon chevalier, qui ensi s'acquitte envers ses seigneurs, on le doit moult recommander.'

Enrique of Trastamara, and his ability to spur the fighting spirit of his retinue. He also relates the great deeds performed by men fighting on Enrique's side, like Bértrand du Guesclin and Arnold d'Audrehem. The defeated French had performed nobly, says Froissart, for if the Spanish had done their part as well as the French, the English and Gascons should have suffered more pain than they did. However, according to Froissart, the fault was not Enrique's, for he had well admonished his forces and was able to install courage in his men and prevent them from fleeing three times. Enrique also fought very valiantly himself, did many fine feats of arms and ought to be greatly honoured and praised for his actions, the author says.¹³⁵ The English on their part, won 'by noble chivalry and great prowess of arms' and as always, the Prince himself was the flower of all chivalry, states Froissart.¹³⁶

However, prowess was but one of the virtues associated with chivalry. From Froissart's text we can discern that it was also important for a man of honour to be known for his excellence in manners - his *courtesy*. One of the best examples of this is of course the description of how the victorious Prince Edward received King John of France with great ceremony after the battle of Crécy, quoted at the beginning of this dissertation.¹³⁷ As seen, King John was here served by the Prince in person who refused to sit at the King's table because he was by no means 'worthy to sit at the table of so mighty a prince and so brave a soldier as he [the King of France] had proved himself to be on that day'.¹³⁸ The Prince courteously consoled the King with

¹³⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 583. 'D'autre part, li rois Henris, en tous estas, se acquitta très vaillamment, et recouvra et retourna ses gens par trois fois.'

¹³⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 582. ' . . . par grant proece et vaillandise d'armes; car, au voir dire, avoech le prince estoit là toute la fleur de la chevalerie dou monde et li milleur combatant.'

¹³⁷ An event reported fully by Froissart and with less detail by Chandos' herald in *La vie de Prince Noir*. See the description in the translation of *La Vie de Prince Noir in Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, ed. and trans. Richard Barber. Woodbridge 1979. p. 103.

¹³⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 397. 'Quant ce vint au soir, li princes de Galles donna à souper en sa loge le roy de France, . . . Et assist li princes le roy Jehan . . . à une table moult haute et bien couverte; et tous les autres signeurs, barons et chevaliers, as aultres tables. Et toutdis servoit li

the thought that he would be well treated by his father, Edward III, and claimed that John of France through his valour had won the prize of chivalry that day. This, he said, was not to flatter the King, for everyone, both the English and French agreed on this.

It may of course be argued that the Prince was motivated by more rational considerations in his treatment of the French king. However, according to John Barnie, it would be an over-simplification to conclude from this passage that the Prince's behaviour was hypocritical or that it merely provides yet another example of chivalry as 'a splendid pageant, an elaborate game to mask the coarser aspects of existence'.¹³⁹ Ritualistic courtesy of the kind performed by the Black Prince at Poitiers was an essential element in the ideal of the noble life which knights professed to follow, says Barnie. It is of course difficult to know what John felt after his unexpected defeat. He must obviously have felt humbled, and maybe even more so by the Prince's extravagant behaviour towards him. Still, the account given by

princes audevant de la table dou roy et par toutes les aultres tables ossi, si humlement que il pooit; ne onques ne se volt seoir à le table dou roy, pour prière que li rois en fesist, ains disoit toutdis que il n'estoit mies encores si souffissans que il apertenist à lui de seoir à le table de si grant prince et de si vaillant homme que li corps de li estoit et que moustré avoit à le journée. Et toutdis s'engenilloit par devant le roy, et disoit bien: "Chiers sires, ne voelliés mies faire simple cière, pour tant se Diex n'i a hui volu consentir vostre voloir; car certainement monseigneur mon père vous fera toute l'onneur et amisté qu'il pora, et se acordera à vous si raisonnablement que vous demorrés bon amit ensamble à tousjours. Et m'est avis que vous avés grant raison de vous esleecier, comment que la besongne ne soit tournée à vostre gret; car vous avés conquis au jour d'ui le haut nom de proèce, et avés passet tous le mieulz faisans de vostre costet. Je ne le di mies, ce saciés, chiers sires, pour vous lober; car tout cil de nostre partie, qui ont veu les uns et les aultres, se sont, par plainne sieute, à ce acordet, et vous en donnent le pris et le chapelet, se vous le volés porter." A ce point commença cescuns à murmurer, et disoient, entre yaus, Francois et Englès, que noblement et à point li prices avoit parlet. Si le prisoient durement et disoient communalment que en lui avoit et aroit encores gentil signeur, se il pooit longement durer ne vivre, et en tel fortune perseverer.'

¹³⁹ Barnie, J: *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War. 1337 - 1399*. London 1974. pp. 80 - 81. It should be noted that courteous treatment of the most prominent members of the defeated party after a battle did not only occur in medieval times, but is something which is also found much later in European history, even in descriptions of World War 1. However, the humility and servile attitude Froissart of the Prince is different.

Froissart shows that the French King's status within the aristocratic hierarchy was widely recognised. 'Edward's serving at King John's table acknowledged in symbolic form what was self-evident to all those present: the French king's superior status even in captivity', says Barnie. In this context the action was not hypocritical, but a meaningful ritual, Barnie states.

In my opinion, Barnie is right to argue that the King of France possessed such amounts of social, cultural and symbolic capital that, although defeated, his status could not be disregarded. When relating the status of the French king in Book IV of his chronicles, Froissart says that 'the King of France is the most worthy, noble and powerful king in the world'.¹⁴⁰ However, I believe that Froissart's account also demonstrates that it was the Black Prince - and not his defeated adversary - who gained the most by acting in such a servile or courteous manner. According to the chronicler, it was the Prince, not John, who in fact, won the approbation of the assembled company by acknowledging the prowess of his noble enemy. By showing his admiration for the feats of arms of his adversary, the Prince showed his own generous and chivalrous character, his eminence in social conduct, his courtesy, and was able to gain the recognition of his peers and establish himself as a 'primus inter pares' at a young age.

A similar mechanism is also seen in Froissart's account of the first meeting between the Black Prince and the King of Castile, Pedro, who by no means is a man celebrated by Froissart, but on the contrary portrayed as a cruel and cowardly king,

¹⁴⁰ When lamenting the fate of Charles VI who became ill with a mental disorder, Froissart states: 'A considérer raison et ymaginer toutes choses en vérité, ce fut grant pitié de ce que le roy de France pour ce temps, qui est le plus digne, le plus noble et le plus puissant roy du monde, chéy en telle débilité que de perdre son sens tout soudainement.' See Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 43.

failing to uphold his promises and financial obligations.¹⁴¹ When King Pedro of Castile came to Aquitaine to seek the help of the Prince in his struggle against his bastard brother, Enrique, Froissart describes how the Prince received the King with 'honour and feast'.¹⁴² No prince knew better than him how to honour a guest, says Froissart, showing that the prince had gained great renown for his hospitality. When Pedro and the Prince rode together, the Prince let the King ride in front, says Froissart who clearly did not see this behaviour as strictly necessary. And again we see that it is the Prince who gained the most through his courteous actions.

Edward the Black Prince is mainly shown as a man who knew how to act with honour in every situation, and on some occasions his wish to act with honour and courtesy was in contradiction to what one would generally consider the most 'advantageous' course of action. After the battle of Najera Bertrand du Guesclin had been taken for ransom by Sir John Chandos, an English knight highly praised by Froissart.¹⁴³ Being a worthy and noble enemy, du Guesclin was well treated in captivity, and is said to have praised his captors in a meeting with the Black Prince. However, Froissart also describes how du Guesclin, here defied the Prince: ' . . . it is said in the realm of France and in other places, that you fear me so much that you

¹⁴¹ History persists in calling Pedro 'the Cruel' although in reality he may not have been worse than for instance his Aragonese rival, Pedro IV of Aragon (also called Pere del Punyalet - Peter the Knife). Pedro the Cruel was accused of having poisoned his wife Blanche de Bourbon and is believed to have viewed killing as the solution to many of his problems. His enemies claimed that his relationship with the Jews had instigated Pedro's cruel actions. Whatever the extent of his character flaws, the troubles of Pedro I of Castile were due in no small part to his harsh treatment of the feudal nobility.

¹⁴² SHF Livre I. Tome VI. § 550. 'Quant il l'encontra, il l'onnera de fait et de parolles moult grandement, car bien le savoit faire, nulz princes à son temps mieulz de lui. Et quant il se furent recueilliet et conjoy, ensi comme il apertenoit, il chevaucièrent vers Bordiaus. Et mist li dis princes le roy dan Piètre au dessus de lui, ne onques ne le volt faire ne consentir aultrement.'

¹⁴³ See for instance SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 345 ' . . . messires Jehans Chandos, qui jà avoit le renommée d'estre li uns des milleurs chevaliers de toute Engleterre, de sens, de force, d'eur, de fortune, de haute emprise et de bon conseil; et par especial li rois avoit son fil le prince recommandé à lui et en sa garde.'

dare not let me out, something which is a great honour to me.¹⁴⁴ Understanding well the words of du Guesclin, and that his own council would not let du Guesclin go easily, says Froissart, the Black Prince stated that fear was by no means a motivation for keeping du Guesclin captured and offered du Guesclin his freedom for one hundred thousand franks.¹⁴⁵

The Prince, in Froissart's account, could clearly not let du Guesclin's challenge pass for fear of loosing honour. However, as soon as he had spoken, says the author, the Prince regretted what he had said. But having agreed to the said terms, and being a 'wise and loyal knight', the Prince would not go back on his word, says Froissart. 'We should be widely reproached and shamed, if we should not have put him to ransom, seeing that he was willing to pay such a large sum as one hundred thousand francs,' the Prince is said to have replied to his council's reproaches.¹⁴⁶ Since du Guesclin was highly esteemed by the King of France and other noblemen of the realm, it took him less than a month to raise the sum of his ransom, says Froissart, thus indicating the great worth and valour of the Breton knight and the fact that the Prince had indeed let his prisoner go for a small ransom.

¹⁴⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 592. ' "Monsieur, respondi messires Bertranz, il ne me fu, Dieu merci, onques mès mieulz, et c'est drois qu'il me soit bien, car je sui li plus honorés chevaliers dou monde, quoique je demeure en vo prison, et vous sarés pourquoi et comment. On dist, parmi le royaume de France et ailleurs ossi, que vous me doubtés et ressongniés tant que vous ne m'osés mettre hors de vostre prison." '

¹⁴⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 592. 'Li princes de Galles entendi ceste parolle et cuida bien que messires Bertranz le desist à bon sens. . . . Si respondi: "Voires, messire Bertran, pensés vous donc que pour vostre chevalerie nous vous retenons? Par saint Gorge! nennil; et, biau sire, paiiés cent mil frans, et vous serés delivrés." '

¹⁴⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 592. ' . . . ses consaulz . . . li disent: "Monseigneur, vous avés trop mal fait, quant si legierment vous l'avés rançonné. . . . Mès li princes, qui fu sages et loyaus chevaliers toutdis, en respondi bien à point, et dist: "Puisque acordé li avons, nous li tenrons, ne ja n'en irons arrière. Blames et virgongne nous seroit, se reprocie nous estoit que nous ne le voissions mettre à finance, quant, il s'i voet mettre si grossement que paiier cent mil frans." '

Froissart clearly cherished these marvellous displays of *courtoisie* and often shows that noblemen of different nationality and allegiance held each other in mutual esteem.¹⁴⁷ When the Black Prince heard that King Enrique was moving against him, during the Prince's invasion of Castile in 1367, he was right joyous, says Froissart, and praised his opponent for his valiant behaviour.¹⁴⁸ Later, when the English knight Sir John Chandos died fighting, Froissart describes how his death was lamented amongst the noble and valiant knights of France.¹⁴⁹ When relating the death of the Black Prince in 1376, Froissart says that King Charles of France held a mass in the Holy Chapel to honour his dead relative, 'who was the flower of chivalry of England'. The fact that the Prince had pillaged and ravaged great parts of the French countryside is not mentioned.

Linked to courtesy in Froissart's account, is the virtue *generosity*, and we find that Count Gaston Fébus of Foix was a man whose generosity was well known by all, a fact related in a discussion between Froissart and one of the Count's knights:

¹⁴⁷ Words like 'English' or 'French' often denotes allegiance, rather than nationality, observes Brereton, in 'Notes in Form of Glossary' at the end of his translated edition of Froissart. 'The lord of Albret married into the French royal family and 'became French'. The inhabitants of La Rochelle were 'French' only after they had changed sides. English is used in the same way,' says Brereton. See Froissart, Jean: *Chronicles*. Trans. Geoffrey Brereton. London 1968. p. 475.

¹⁴⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 568. ' Quant li princes, qui se tenoit encores à Sauveterre, entendi ce que li rois Henris avoit passet l'aigue et prenoit son chemin et ses adrèces pour venir vers lui, si en fu moult resjois, et dist si haut que tout l'oïrent cil qui estoient autour de lui: " Par ma foy, cils bastars Henris est uns vaillans et hardis chevaliers, et li vient de grant proèce et de grant hardement nous querre ensi." '

¹⁴⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 646. 'Partout deça et dela le mer, de ses amis et amies fu plains et regretés messires Jehans Chandos; et li rois de France et li signeur en France l'eurent tantost ploré. Ensi aviennent les besongnes. Li Englès l'amoient, pour tant qu'en li estoient toutes hautainnes emprises. Li François le haioient, pour ce qu'il ressongnoient. Si l'oy je bien, en ce temps, plaindre et regreter des bons chevaliers et des vaillans de France. Et disoient ensi que de lui estoit grans damages, et mieuls vausist qu'il eüst esté pris que mors; car, se il eüst esté pris, il estoit bien si sages et si imaginatis que il eüst trouvé aucun moien, par quoi pais eüst esté entre France et Engleterre . . . '

Lors lui demanday je: "Sire et a quelz gens donne il [Gaston Fébus] ces dons?" Il me respondi: "Aux estrangiers, aux chevaliers, aux escuiers qui vont et chevauchent par son païs, à heraulx, à menestrelz, à toutes gens qui parloient à lui. Nul ne se part sans ses dons, car qui les refuseroit, il se courrouceroit."¹⁵⁰

According to Froissart everyone who passed Fébus' court received a gift and the Count had a reputation for being an excellent gift-giver. The Count's generosity is also mentioned later in Froissart's account, when he speaks of the chests where Gaston Fébus kept the money he liked to distribute to passing knights and squires. Gift giving (of money, land, valuables, but also of positions, heiresses and privileges) is sufficiently described in every aristocratic source from this epoch, often on a lavish scale, and was not only limited to the highest nobles and the king. As we may gather from the instructive texts of both Lulle and Charny, gift giving was expected of every member of the knightly class, even a young 'chevalier errant'. The apparently disinterested open-handedness so often described in medieval aristocratic literature has sometimes been perceived as 'irrational', because it is contrary to modern capitalistic beliefs in the maximisation of profit, investment and the accumulation of capital. In medieval aristocratic narratives we often hear of one fortune after another being made in war, but soon lost or spent. 'No hoarding, but tossing back the gains - from mercenary pay, royal gifts, ransoms, resale of fiefs etc. - onto the game board, in hope of greater gains, or for the sake of adventure, or simply in his lord's service,' says Richard Vernier of the financial dealings of Bertrand du Guesclin.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 9. pp. 140 - 141.

¹⁵¹ Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War.* Woodbridge 2003. p. 160.

However, if one accepts that gift giving was an important element in the creation and consolidation of social, political and, as a result, economical power, one may see that generosity was all but irrational, even in an economical perspective. Through the gift a relation of mutual support and loyalty was established, thus, making it the foundation for future gains. In addition, to have a reputation as a good gift-giver enhanced the giver's honour, thus leading to increased status and more political opportunities. In his book on chivalry, Charny advises on conduct towards both friends and enemies and says that the knight ' . . . should never regret any generosity . . . shown and any gifts well bestowed, for the above-mentioned men of worth tell you that a man of worth should not remember what he has given except when the recipient brings the gift back to mind for the good return he makes of it.' Also, he says, the knight should avoid acquiring a bad reputation for miserliness in his old age: ' for the more you have given, the more you should give.'¹⁵²

In the nature of the gift lies the obligation to give a counter-gift, says Marcel Mauss in his famous essay, *Le Don*.¹⁵³ The counter-gift does not, however, have to be of the same kind as the first. Good counsels and military service could be exchanged for an heiress, an office or a piece of land. However, gift-giving implied a knowledge of the unwritten rules of society, a fact that Froissart seems highly aware of when he later tells us that 'the Count [Gaston Fébus] knew exactly from whom it was proper to take and to whom to give'.¹⁵⁴ This statement alludes to the symbolic importance of gift giving and the dual status of the nobleman who was both someone else's subject

¹⁵² de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. pp. 71 - 2.

¹⁵³ Mauss, Marcel: *The Gift*. London 1954. (reprint 1988) Initially published in French under the name *Essay sur le Don - Forme achaique de l'échange*. Paris 1925.

¹⁵⁴ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. Livre III. § 13. p. 175. 'Il fu larges et courtois en dons, et trop bien savoit prendre où il appartenoit, et remettre où il afferroit.'

and a lord him-self who was supposed to be generous towards his own retinue and men.

When John Audley (who had been the first to assault the enemy at Poitiers and fought in the front rank of the English army throughout the battle) was carried back on a stretcher at the end of the battle, the Black Prince, according to Froissart promised him a pension of 500 marks for his gallant conduct and brave fighting. But when Audley returned to his own retinue, he summoned his knights and formally gave the money to four of his men who had served as his bodyguards during the battle. The 'rationale' behind the gift giving is explained in the following passage:

Et fist [Audley] venir avant les quatre escuiers que il avoit eu pour son corps, le journée, et dist ensi as chevaliers qui là estoient: "Signeur, il a pleu à monsigneur le prince qu il m'a donné cinq cens mars de revenue par an et en hyretage; pour lequel don je li ay encores fait petit service, et puis faire de mon corps tant seulement. Il est verités que veci quatre escuiers qui m'ont toutdis loyaument servi. Et par especial, à le journée d'ui, ce que j'ay d'onneur, c'est par leur emprise et leur hardement. Pour quoi, en le presense de vous qui estes de mon linage, je leur voel maintenant remunerer les grans et agreables services qu'il m'ont fait. C'est me intention que je leur donne et resi[-g]ne en leur mains le don et le cinq cens mars que messires le princes m'a donnés et acordés, en tel fourme et manière que donnés le mes a; et m'en desherite et les en aherite purement et franchement, sans nul rappel."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 396.

'The honour bestowed on me was won by their enterprise and daring' Audley is reported to have said, and he therefore wanted to give his men the gift he had received. This was clearly an act applauded by Froissart, who proceeds to show how Audley was richly remunerated for his generosity. When the Black Prince heard of Audley's gift to his three squires, he summoned Audley to hear why he had done so, says Froissart. Audley answered that his men had served him well and loyally, and especially on the day when he received the gift. In fact, had his men not helped him, he would have been killed.

'Monsigneur, respondi li chevaliers, par ma foy o il très grandement; et le raison qui me meut au faire, je le vous dirai. . . ciers sires, je ne sui c'uns seulz homs et ne puis q'un homme; et sus le confort et ayde d'yaus, je empris à acomplir le veu que de lonch temps avoie voé . . . Dont, quant j'ai consideré le bonté et l'amour qu'il me moustrèrent, je n'euisse pas éste bien courtois et avisé, se je ne leur euisse guerredonné; car monsigneur, Dieu merci, tousjours ay je assés eu et arai tant com je vivrai, ne onques de chavance ne m'esbahi ne esbahirai.' ¹⁵⁶

Seeing that Audley had spoken honourably and reasonably, the Prince found that he could not blame him for what he had done, says Froissart, and gave him another gift of six hundred marks on the same conditions as the first gift.

Gift giving ensured loyalty, and although glory was generally perceived as being more important than financial gain in the traditional chivalrous ethos, wealth could sometimes be of primary importance. This is clearly seen in Froissart's description of the French king's gifts of land to Bertrand du Guesclin, who already possessed an

¹⁵⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 398.

ample amount of symbolic capital due to his martial exploits.¹⁵⁷ Still, according to Froissart, the King found it necessary to bestow various gifts on the valiant, but relatively poor Breton knight, when he appointed him Constable of France, both 'domains and rents for himself and his heirs in perpetuity'.¹⁵⁸ From other sources we know that du Guesclin was made viscount of Pontorson, and was also given several manors and forests in Normandy.¹⁵⁹ However, the gifts presented to du Guesclin were not merely payment for a job well done; they represented the foundation for a relationship of primary political and military importance.¹⁶⁰

In Froissart's description, du Guesclin was a modest man who accepted the offer to become Constable of France, not out of personal ambition, but out of *loyalty* to the

¹⁵⁷ The Breton knight, Bertrand du Guesclin, rose from provincial obscurity to the highest military office in France, constable, and to a dukedom in Spain. Du Guesclin was a knight of great professional ability and his life and deeds were celebrated by Cuvelier in *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin*. For a recent biography see Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003.

¹⁵⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 668. ' . . . Adonc s'escusa messires Bertrands moult grandement et très sagement, et dist qu'il n'en estoit mies dignes, et que c'estoit uns povres chevaliers et petis bacelers ou regard des grans signeurs et vaillans hommes de France, comment que fortune l'eust un petit avanciet. Là li dist li rois que il s'escusoit pour noient et qu'il couvenoit qu'il le fust, car il estoient ensi ordonné et déterminé de tout le conseil de France, lequel il ne voloit mies brisier . . . Messires Bertrands cogneut bien que escusances, que il sceuist ne peüst faire ne moustrer, ne valoient riens: si s'accorda finalement à l'ordonance dou roy, mès ce fu à dur et moult envis. Là fu pourvus à grant joie messires Bertrands de Claiekin de l'office de le connestablie de France; et pour li plus exaucier, li rois l'assist dalés lui à sa table et li moustra tous les signes d'amour qu'il peut; et li donna en ce jour avoech l'offisce plus de quatre mils frans de revenue, en hiretage, lui et son hoir. A celle promotion mist grant painne et grant conseil li dus d'Ango.'

¹⁵⁹ Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. p. 177.

¹⁶⁰ The gift made to du Guesclin was indeed extraordinary although it received the unanimous support of the royal dukes. In fact, the author of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* felt compelled to justify this extraordinary promotion, noting that the Breton knight was chosen 'because of his valour, for he was of lesser lineage than other constables . . . before him; but by his valour he had acquired several great estates and fiefs . . .' says Vernier. See Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. pp .157 - 58.

King. Several noblemen described by Froissart are explicitly said to be loyal men, ready to support their king or lord. The most telling example is perhaps the often quoted and highly emotional portrayal of the blind King of Bohemia, John of Luxembourg, who in spite of his handicap wanted to participate in the battle at Crécy.¹⁶¹ Although his men must have known that this was highly dangerous and could mean the end to them all, they agreed because, according to Froissart, they 'cherished his honour and their own prowess'. Although the King and his men came so close to the enemy that the King was able to use his sword several times, they all died in the battle. Another example of this type of loyal behaviour is the description of the battle of Poitiers where John Audley is said to have approached the Black Prince urging him to let him go in the front. Audley claimed that he in the past had made a solemn vow to be amongst the first attackers, in such an encounter as the battle of Poitiers.¹⁶² The Prince granted Audley's wish and Audley went to the forefront to fight only accompanied by four squires, says Froissart. As we saw above, Audley was richly rewarded for his 'loyal and courageous' behaviour.

However, it was not only the knight who was obligated to act with loyalty towards his lord. The lord had an obligation to treat his men in such a manner that he ensured their loyalty. This is a view Froissart seems to share with Geoffroy de Charny who in his text states that the ruler should 'love, honour and hold dear the good and wise and the men of worth, to pay heed to their words, to associate closely

¹⁶¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 279. 'Li vaillans et gentilz rois de Behagne . . . entendi par ses gens que la bataille estoit commencie; car quoique il fust là armés et en grant arroy, il ne veoit goutes et estoit aveules . . . Adonc dist li vaillans rois à ses gens une grant vaillandise: "Signeur, vous estes mi homme et mi ami et mi compaignon. A le journée d'ui, je vous pri et requier très especialement que vous me menés si avant que je puisse ferir un cop d'espée." Et cil qui dalés lui estoient, et qui se honneur et leur avancement amoient, li acordèrent.'

¹⁶² SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 384. 'Messires James d'Audelée . . . s' en vint devers le prince, et li dist: "Monsigneur, j'ai servi tousjours loyaument monsigneur votre père et vous ossi, et ferai tant com je vivrai . . . Si vous pri chierement, en guerredon que je fis onques de servicez au roy vostre père et vous ossi, que vous me donnés congiet que de vous, à me honneur, je me puisse partir et mettre en estat de acomplir mon veu.'

with them and enjoy their company.'¹⁶³ In Froissart's account magnates and kings would go to great lengths to ensure the loyalty of their men, and the ones that did not, like Pedro the Cruel, clearly suffered:

En ce temps, y avoit un roy en Castile qui s'appeloit dan Pières, de merueilleuses opinions plains, et estoit durement rebelles à tous commandemens et ordnenances de l'Eglise, et voloit sousmettre tous ses voisins cresttiens . . . Avoech tout ce, cilz rois dans Pières avoit trois frères bastars . . . Cils bastars Henris estoit et fu moult hardis et preus chevaliers . . . Cilz rois dans Pières, si com fames couroit, avoit fait morir la mère de ces enfans moult diversement: de quoi il lor en desplaisoit, c'estoit bien raisons. Avoech tout ce, ossi [avoit] fait morir et exilliet plusieurs haus barons dou royaume de Castile, et estoit si crueulz et si plains d'erreur et de austerité que tout si homme le cremoient et ressongnoient et le haoient, se moustrer li osaissent. Et avoit fait morir une très bonne et sainte dame que il avoit eu à femme . . .'¹⁶⁴

When this despised King Pedro tried to summon the noblemen of Castille to help him defend his realm against the attack of his half-brother and his allies, too few men obeyed his command, says Froissart. Instead, they turned to his brother, who was able to rally both local and foreign men around his cause. Enrique rode from town to town, says Froissart, and was well received everywhere he went. He gave great gifts and gained renown for being a generous and honourable lord, 'worthy of

¹⁶³ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. pp. 77 - 78.

¹⁶⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome VI. § 547. The differences in spelling of 'Pières' and 'Piètres' are found in the SHF edition.

reigning'.¹⁶⁵ Pedro, on the other hand, was deserted by his own nobility and had to plead his cause to the Black Prince who only accepted to support him, says Froissart, because he believed it to be against the right order of the world that an illegitimate son of a king should overthrow his legitimate elder brother.¹⁶⁶ Loyalty as we may see above was 'bought' with gifts, and if the gifts were not adequate a lord could find that a former 'friend' or ally had sought his luck elsewhere.¹⁶⁷

But in addition to the values mentioned above; *prowess, courtesy, generosity* and *loyalty*, the ideal knight should also be *pious*, and as we may see in the quotation above Froissart remarks that Gaston Fébus gave to the poor and said prayers several times a day. Although religion, at the end of the 14th century, seldom furnished the mainspring of action it remained the foremost article in the formal code of a knight. 'Charny's tone is insistently religious, at times even puritanical', says Kaeuper of

¹⁶⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome VI. § 548. 'Si chevaucha li dis Henris de cité en cité et de ville en ville, et partout li fist on reverense et recueilleite de roy. Si donna li dis rois Henris au chevaliers estragniers, qui remis ens ou royaume de Castile l'avoient, grans dons et riches jeuiaus, tant et si largement que tout le recommandoient pour large et honnourable signeur. Et disoient communement Francois, Normans et Bretons, que en lui avoit noble et vaillant signeur, et qu' il estoit dignes de vivre et de tenir terre et regneroit encores poissamment et en grant prosperité.'

¹⁶⁶ It is difficult to establish to what extent Froissart applauded the Prince's decision and the author consistingly seems to favour the bastard Enrique to his legitimate brother. Still, to place a bastard on a Christian throne went strongly against the political sensibilities of the time. It was also a dangerous precedent, undermining the sacrosanct principle of legitimate succession. Nevertheless, the overall impression is that Froissart was far more favourable towards Enrique who he perceived as more courteous and valiant than Pedro and later describes how Pedro refused to heed his promises to the Black Prince who expected to be well rewarded for his support.

¹⁶⁷ In Froissart's account we find both Robert d'Artois and Geoffroi de Harcourt described as men of honour in spite of the fact that they were, in principle, 'traitors to the French cause'. One of the most famous men who also shifted his allegiance was the Count of Hainault who was bound to the English crown by kinship. Because Hainault was in the Empire, the Count fought against Philippe de Valois at Cambrai. However, when the fighting was on French soil he shifted sides and joined Philip. SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 259. p. 138.

Geoffroy de Charny's work on chivalry.¹⁶⁸ Although Fortune may seem for a time rogue force, it has no permanent power, according to Charny. Instead Charny's view seems to be that God will distribute the real rewards to His warriors for their good deeds, says Kaeuper. However, Charny's view is also that daring and hardship will be rewarded by bliss, and earthly honour given as a reward from God. Asserting that knights suffer more than clergy, Charny also claims that 'the good order of knighthood . . . should be considered the most rigorous order of all, especially for those who uphold it well and conduct themselves in a way in keeping with the purpose for which the order was established.'¹⁶⁹ Apparently there is no contradiction between a worthy knightly vocation and true religion. In this respect, Charny's viewpoint resembles the opinion attributed to William Marshal on his deathbed generations before Charny, when the formidable Marshal was asked to repent his sinful actions in war and tournament.¹⁷⁰

Froissart's text resembles Charny's in that his religious mentality and piety appears to be as conventional as it is omnipresent. Still, we also find the same pragmatic and independent approach, especially concerning issues like sexual morality, tournament and violence. It should also be noted that in the description of how the King of Cyprus travelled around to the courts of Europe trying to persuade kings and princes to undertake a crusade, the chronicler's focus is on the great pomp with which the King was received, rather than his cause. He also states matter-of-factly

¹⁶⁸ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. p. 26.

¹⁶⁹ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. p. 95

¹⁷⁰ HGM Verses 18478 - 500: "The Marshal said: "Henry, listen to me, the prelates are too hard on us. They demand too much. I have taken 500 knights with weapons, horses and equipment. If the Kingdom of Heaven is thus, closed to me, I can do nothing. . . The prelates should ask no more of me. Either they are wrong, or nobody can be saved." ' (My translation)

that Edward III and his sons had better things to do than to go on a crusade.¹⁷¹ This should not, however, be seen as a sign of Froissart's general lack of enthusiasm for crusading. When Gaston Fébus rescued the ladies of Meaux from the *Jacques*, he and his cousin Captal de Buch were returning from a crusade organised by the Teutonic knights against the unbelievers in Lithuania, an adventure the chronicler clearly found commendable.¹⁷²

However, the description of the rescuing of the ladies of Meaux also points to another aspect of the ideal knight, namely that he should also be a 'lover', capable of gallant and refined treatment of women.¹⁷³ In the description of Gaston Fébus, we may notice that Froissart describes the Count to have taken great pleasure in 'arms and love' and appreciated Romance literature and minstrelsy, 'of which he had an excellent knowledge'. He liked his clerks to sing songs, rondeaux and virelays to him and had travelling entertainers perform for him between courses at meals. Unlike many aristocratic authors from the earlier Middle Ages, (and even contemporary ones like Cuvelier in his celebration of the life and deeds of Bertrand du Guesclin) who hardly make any allusions to Romance at all, Froissart puts some emphasis on the relationship between men and women and occasionally describes

¹⁷¹ SHF Livre I. Tome VI. § 503 - 8.

¹⁷² According to Maurice Keen we must remember that chivalry was an ethic that was at once Christian and martial and aristocratic. 'Its elitist social and martial overtones undoubtedly contributed much to its enduring force, at least as much as the Christian sanction that it had acquired in an earlier age.' Thus, according to Keen, crusading enthusiasm remained alive at the end of the 14th century and was still widely respected as the highest expression of chivalrous dedication. See Keen, Maurice: *Nobles, knights and men-at-arms in the Middle Ages*. London 1996. p. 117.

¹⁷³ By the time Froissart composed his Chronicles the word '*amoreux*' had come to mean not only the lover, but also the general virtues of the knight, and the idea prevailed that no man could be a knight who was not a perfect lover. See the Conclusion in Leyerle, J. and Benson, Larry D. ed.: *Chivalric literature. Essays on relations between literature and life in the later middle ages*. Kalamazoo 1980. Richard Green, in an essay, also reminds us that in the later Middle Ages he who would be a courtier had to learn also to be a lover. See Richard Green, 'The Familia Regis and the Familia Cupidinis', in V.J. Sattergood and J.W. Sherbourne (eds), *Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1983. pp. 87 - 108.

men fighting to win a lady's favour. He also includes descriptions of knights and kings in love, like the Duke of Touraine's infatuation with a young Parisienne and Edward III's courting of the Countess of Salisbury, Alys, said to be one of the most beautiful women in England.¹⁷⁴

Froissart's description of the siege of Rennes illustrates the relationship between arms and love very well. Here an English knight, carrying some partridges he has caught, approached the gates and asked to speak with Bertrand du Guesclin, who commanded the defence. Olivier de Mauni, one of the French knights, demanded if the Englishman was willing to sell or give the birds to the ladies of the town and the Englishman challenged de Mauni to fight for them. De Mauni accepted and Froissart describes how the 'delighted' ladies of the city observed the fight. When de Mauni had overcome his adversary he led him and the partridges into the town and presented them to the ladies who accepted the gift with great joy. When de Mauni later received a severe wound, which refused to heal, he begged for safe conduct through the English lines in order to get medical care. The English commander, the Duke of Lancaster, who did not want to be outdone in gallantry, had him treated by his own physicians and then sent him back to Rennes, entirely restored to health. Upon his departure the Duke loaded de Mauni with gifts saying. 'Mauni, je vous prie que vous me recommandez aux dames et damoiselles, et leur dittes que nous leur avons souhiadé souvent perdriz'.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Jean le Bel in his chronicles claims that Edward III actually raped the young countess when he passed through her domains on her way to Scotland. The events are somewhat differently described in the *Chroniques*, and there are also differences between the events portrayed in Froissart's different redactions. For a discussion of this see Diller, G.T.: *Attitudes chevaleresques et réalités politiques chez Froissart. Microlectures du premier livre de Chroniques*. Genève 1984. pp. 77 - 138. Froissart however claims the King to have behaved respectfully. See SHF Livre I. Tome II. § 157 - 160. 'Aucune fois il se ravisoit, car honneurs et loyautés le reprenoit de mettre son coer en tèle fausseté, pour deshonnorer si vaillant dame, et si loyal chevalier comme ses maris estoit, qui si loyaument l'avoit toutdis servi. D'autre part, amours le constraindoit si fort que elle vaincoit et surmontoit honneur et loyauté. Ensi se debatoit li rois en lui, tout le jour et toute le nuit.'

¹⁷⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome VI. pp. 23 - 26.

Based on the findings related above, (and numerous other similar examples in the *Chroniques*) there can be no doubt that Froissart's ideal nobleman should be handsome, courteous, generous, loyal, pious, bold, courageous and gallant towards women.¹⁷⁶ Thus, the ideal he propagates seems very similar to the ideal we find described in the works of for instance Lulle and de Charny. However, Froissart's account also contains more information about the noble Count of Foix, information about events and actions that are not so easily fitted into a rigid chivalrous ideal.

2. 2. 'A demander et à savoir'¹⁷⁷ - a more complex or eclectic ideal?

As we may see in the quote above, Froissart was deeply taken in by both the Count and his court, and he continued to show his enthusiasm in the poem *Dit du Florin*, which he composed after the money he received from Gaston Fébus as a reward for his services at Orthez, was stolen.¹⁷⁸ However, in spite of being favourable to the Count and his deeds, Froissart's account of what he learned about the Count at his court also contains the dramatic account of the events leading to the death of the

¹⁷⁶ Froissart also mentions that Gaston Fébus was a great hunter and loved dogs more than any other beasts. The Count himself had written a book, *Les déduits de la chasse*, not mentioned by Froissart, on the pleasures of hunting, an activity in which he believed nobody was more skilled than himself. Hunting kept the nobleman occupied and kept him from doing evil deeds. In turn this meant that the huntsman would 'go straight to Paradise', according to Gaston Fébus.

¹⁷⁷ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre III. § 13. pp. 177 - 78.* Froissart states: 'Je tendoie trop fort à demander et à savoir, pour tant que je veoie l'ostel du conte de Fois si large et plantureux, que Gaston le filz du conte estoit devenus, ne par quel accident il estoit mort . . . ' The phrase highlights the inquisitive mind of Froissart and that he was obviously set on getting to know the causes of events.

¹⁷⁸ See the discussion of *Dit du Florin* in Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 181 - 83 and pp. 189 - 92, in Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. pp. 154 - 55 and in Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XiVe siecle*. Pau 1976. pp. 124 - 27. Tucoo-Chala also cites part of *Dit du Florin* in his book.

Count's only legitimate son, Gaston, an account that goes far beyond the celebration of traditional chivalrous virtues. 'S'il admire le "gentil comte de Foix", le chroniqueur ne fait pas silence sur ses défauts . . . ,' says Pierre Tucoo-Chala,¹⁷⁹ a view in opposition to the view of William Brandt who stated that the aristocratic author, including Froissart, only fully perceived human beings insofar as they fell within a strict aristocratic value system.¹⁸⁰

Froissart says that he was very eager to know the cause for the death of the young Gaston, and he obtained information about these events from an 'old and distinguished' squire, because his former informant, Espan de Lyon, had been unwilling to disclose the details of what happened, thereby indicating that the account contains information about events that were not necessarily favourable to the Count.¹⁸¹ To have an anonymous squire relate the events also gave the author the opportunity to be somewhat neutral in relation to the events he describes.¹⁸²

Gaston Fébus, the old squire told Froissart, was married to the sister of the King of Navarre who at some point had given surety for the Lord of Albret whom the Count of Foix was holding ransom for fifty thousand francs. Knowing his brother-in-law to be both 'cunning and deceitful', Gaston Fébus would not allow him credit for that sum, something that displeased his wife who felt that her brother's word ought to satisfy her husband. Persuaded by his wife, the Count agreed to let the Lord of

¹⁷⁹Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XiVe siecle*. Pau 1976. p. 127. 'Froissart . . . cherche la vérité sur le drame d'Orthez et tout en essayant d'innocenter le comte, il ne cache pas l'essentiel.'

¹⁸⁰ Brandt, William, *The Shape of Medieval History*, p.130. In fact, he says, there was no aristocratic idea of human nature. 'What functioned in its place was the aristocratic idea of good.'

¹⁸¹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. Livre III. § 13. p. 178. ' . . . car messire Espaeng de Lion ne le m'avoit voulu dire. Et tant en enquis que un escuier ancien et moult notable homme le me dist.'

¹⁸² *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. Livre III. § 13. p. 178. This is a point noted in note 2 on p. 178.

Albret go, but although the Lord paid his ransom to the King of Navarre, Gaston Fébus never saw any of the money. Enraged by the deceit of his brother-in-law, he urged his wife to go to Navarre to obtain the money. However, the lady of Foix was not lucky, and her brother refused to part with the money. Seeing that she could not make her brother budge in this matter, the lady of Foix did not dare to return to her husband. 'It was more than she could risk, for she knew how harsh her husband could be when a thing displeased him'; the squire is reported to have said, a comment that gives us an indication of the more cruel and vindictive sides of the Count's personality.¹⁸³

Gaston the younger, who at this point was aged fifteen or sixteen, wanted to visit his mother and went to stay for a while at his uncle's court. However, on his departure from Navarre, explained the squire, Gaston received a gift from his uncle, a small purse containing a powder which his uncle claimed would make his father's affections for his mother grow back. In reality, however, the purse contained a lethal poison. When this was discovered by the count, the boy was jailed and several knights of the retinue that had accompanied the young Gaston to Spain were killed, according to Froissart's informant.¹⁸⁴ The Count also wanted to have his son put to death, but after having summoned all the nobles and prelates of Foix and Béarn who unanimously begged the Count to have mercy on his son, he decided to keep the young Gaston in prison for a few months and then perhaps send him on a journey

¹⁸³ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13 p. 180. 'La contesse de Fois n'en pot avoir autre chose, si se tint en Navarre et n'osoit retourner. Le conte de Fois, qui veoit le malice du roy de Navarre, commença sa femme grandement à enhaïr et à estre mal content d'elle, ja n'y eust elle coulpe, que tantost son message fait, elle n'estoit retournee. La dame n'osoit, qui sentoit son mari cruel là où il prenoit la chose à desplaisance.'

¹⁸⁴ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13 pp. 184 -5. ' . . . il (Fébus) en fist mourir jusques à quinze tres horriblement, et la raison que il y mettoit estoit tele, que il ne sceussent de ses secrez, et li deussent avoir signifié. . . '

for two or three years until he had 'forgotten his anger'.¹⁸⁵ However, the son did not take well to his imprisonment and refused food.¹⁸⁶ This further enraged the Count who decided to visit his son in prison. Holding a little knife the Count tried threatening his son to eat and wounded him in some vein.¹⁸⁷ Gaston subsequently died, to the great distress of his father who had his head shaved to the skin, put on black and ordered all the members of his household to do the same.¹⁸⁸

The harshness of the Count towards his wife, son and retinue is apparent in the description of these events, and we are left to ponder why Froissart found it necessary to make an anonymous informant be the one who relates the events above. Although clearly of great interest to the author, the actions of Gaston Fébus are not directly questioned on a moral level. Instead, Froissart has chosen to portray the death of the young boy as a mishap, one of Fortune's strange turnings and puts the blame for the events elsewhere: 'Although his father clearly killed him, it was the King of Navarre who gave him the mortal wound', explains the author.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13 p. 185. 'Quant le conte oÿ son peuple qui prioit pour son filz, si se refraigny un petit et se pour pensa que il le chastieroit par prison, et le tendroit en prison deux ou trois mois. Et puis l'enveroieroit en quelque voyage deux ou trois ans demourer, tant que il aroit oublié son mautalent et que li enfent, par avoir plus d'aage, seroit en meilleur et plus vive congnoissance.'

¹⁸⁶ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13 p. 186. 'Le conte de Foix le faisoit tenir en une chambre en la tour d'Ortais où petit avoit de lumiere, et fu là .x. jours. Petit y but et mengea . . . Le conte le faisoit là tenir sans nulle garde qui feust en la chambre avecques li, ne qui le conseillast ne confortast, et fu li enfes tousjours en ses draps, ainsi comme il y entra. Et si se merancia et argua grandement, car il n'avoit pas cela aprins.'

¹⁸⁷ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13. p. 187. 'Il (Fébus) . . . tenoit la lamelle de son coustel par la pointe et si pres de la pointe que il n'en y avoit pas hors de ses dois la longueur de l'espeuseur d'un gros tournois. Par mautalent, en boutant ce tant de pointe en la gorge de son filz il l'assena, ne sçay en quele vaine. . . '

¹⁸⁸ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13. p. 188. 'Lors fist il venir son berbier et se fist rere tout jus, et se mist moult bas et se vesti de noir, et tous ceulx de son hostel'

¹⁸⁹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13. p. 188. 'Son père l'occist voirement, mais le roy de Navarre lui donna le coup de la mort.'

However, although this remark shows that Froissart was not willing to directly blame his host and patron, the events related above also support Tucoo-Chala's opinion that the author was not silent about the Count's shortcomings. Froissart was clearly not satisfied with a superfluous description of the Count where only the more traditional chivalrous virtues were celebrated. On the contrary, the description of the events leading to the death of Gaston reveals the author's desire to disclose what he perceived to be the 'truth' and to analyse people and events - 'to ask and to know'. Froissart 'simultaneously veils and unmasks' the character of Gaston Fébus, says Peter Ainsworth,¹⁹⁰ a comment pointing to the complexity of Froissart's portrayal of the Count.

Froissart returns to the fate of the Count and his realm at a later stage when he relates how in 1391, while preparing for a new trip to Orthez, he heard about the death of the noble Count of Foix and had to change his plans. The Count had suffered a fit and died while out hunting with his dogs. Although the Count's illegitimate son, Yvain the Foix, tried to obtain access to the castle after his father's death, he was forced to resign. Having no legitimate heir, the county of Foix was claimed by the French king who later resigned his claim and let the Viscount of Castelbon inherit both Béarn and Foix, says Froissart.¹⁹¹ Yvain the Foix, who in Froissart's account was the first to notice the little purse of poison around his half-brother's neck, is later reported to have died of burns after a fire at a party given by

¹⁹⁰ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 303.

¹⁹¹ In fact, Froissart provides us with valuable information when he tells us that the viscount of Castlebon would only pay homage to the county of Foix, but not to Bearn: 'car le pays de Berne est de si noble condition que les seigneurs qui par heritage le tiennent, ne'en doivent a nul roy, ne autre seigneur service fors a Dieu.' Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 83.

King Charles.¹⁹² Froissart vividly records the party and the incident, an account that bears witness to the intricate and detailed web of the *Chroniques* and the numerous amounts of singular fates and events recorded.

But Froissart is not only frank about the Count's bad temper, the murder of his young son and later on in his chronicles, the fate of his illegitimate son and the Count's unexpected death leading to the loss of the realm for his lineage. Somewhat unexpectedly, Froissart also presents us with a glimpse of the administration and the financial dealings of the Count:

Onques fol oultraige ne fole largesce n'aima, et vouloit savoir tous les mois que le sien devenoit. Il prenoit en son païs pour sa recepte recevoir, à ses gens servir et administrer, .xij. hommes notables, et de deux mois en deux mois estoit de deux servy en sa dicte recepte, et au chief des deux moys ilz se changoient, et deux autres en l'office retournoient. Il faisoit du plus especial homme au quel il se confioit le plus son contreroleur, et à cellui tous les autres comptoient et rendoient leurs comptes de leur receptes. Et cil contreroleur comptoit au conte de Fois par roulles ou par livres escrips, et ses comptes laissoit par devers le dit conte. Il avoit certains coffres en sa chambre où aucune foiz il faisoit prendre de l'argent pour donner à au[cun] seigneur, chevalier ou escuier quant ilz venoient par devers lui, car onques nul sans don ne se departi de li. Et tousjours multiplioit son tresor pour les aventures et les fortunes attendre que il doubtoit.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 84 – 91.

¹⁹³ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. § 13. p. 175.

In this part of the portrayal of Count, Froissart stresses values that are rarely mentioned in chivalric narratives and celebrations of perfect knights - Fébus' preoccupation with money and his cautious estate management. Although generous, the count disliked excessive extravagance, the chronicler says, and required an account of his wealth once every month. To administer his wealth, Gaston Fébus had made a bureaucracy, and expected to be given accounts that he later checked. The Count also hoarded gold in his chambers, and had chests from which he took money to give to passing lords, knights and squires, says Froissart.¹⁹⁴

From other sources we know that the Count was indeed very occupied by the prosperity of himself and his realm. 'Le compte de Foix avait . . . compris que ses entreprises n'avaient chance de durer qu' à condition de reposer sur une économie prospère,' says Pierre Tucco-Chala in his analysis of the economical basis of the county of Foix and Béarn.¹⁹⁵ Tucco-Chala's analysis relies on numerous sources from Béarn, amongst them the 'oraison funèbre' written by Aymeric de Peyrac, abbé de Moissac around 1399 - 1400, some years after the death of the Count. Here, de Peyrac celebrates the martial exploits of the Count as well as his hunting skills. Still, he also relates what he sees as less appealing traits: 'Il [Gaston Fébus] se livrait à l'hydromancie et l'on disait communément qu'il possédait de l'or pour un poids de mille livres en espèces, de sorte qu'il était le comte le plus riche de tout le royaume, richesse qu'il dépensa largement pour sa gloire en de somptueuses constructions, alors qu'il viola les droits des prélats, chargea son peuple d'impôts et tua son fils de sa propre main, son seul fils légitime!'¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV.* § 13. p. 176. See note 1.

¹⁹⁵ Tucco-Chala, P.: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XiVe siecle.* Pau 1976. pp. 216 - 17.

¹⁹⁶ Tucco-Chala, P.: *Gaston Fébus. Prince des Pyrénées (1331 - 1391).* Anglet 1993. p. 381. 'Disposant de régions dotées d'une agriculture de subsistance assez médiocre, il profita de la

As we may see from de Peyrac's evaluation, Froissart's account of the Count's preoccupation with money was probably rooted in real-life observations. However, the most interesting aspect of Froissart's portrayal, at this point, is not that it is in keeping with what we know to be true, but that the chronicler has chosen to include the detailed description of the Count's administration and estate-management in his chronicles. In Froissart's opinion, the Count's pre-occupation with money and estate-management was clearly admirable and not something that detracted from his honour. The passage also shows the level of detail in Froissart's account. The administrative machinery of Foix described is both elaborate and effective, maybe bearing witness to the development in the administration of royal and baronial courts.¹⁹⁷ Acknowledging the need for a precise overview of his income and expenditure, and an apparatus with which to administer his retainers, the Count, according to Froissart, established an administration of twelve men and kept a keen eye on his estate-management. Although the Count was as generous as every nobleman should be, he is also described as a very cautious man, fearing the 'changing fortunes' of the world.

The Count's interest in ensuring the prosperity of him-self and his realm, could, according to Tucco-Chala, be due to changes in the chivalrous mentality of the later

guerre de Cent ans pour faire comprendre à ses sujets d'où pouvait venir la prospérité: seul un commerce de transit, portant par charrettes ou à dos de mulets apporterait les ressources complémentaires indispensables . . . Ces progrès économiques furent les seuls fruits durables de sa politique intérieure', says Tucco-Chala.

¹⁹⁷ However, it should be noted that there is nothing in Froissart's account that indicates that Fébus' bookkeeping was much more than a charge and discharge system designed to calculate what was nominally due by the accountant. The object was most likely to prevent fraud, not the calculation of profit and losses, although this may have been a side benefit, which would gradually gain more importance. Still, Froissart's account indicates that there may have been a real need for an effective administration. A man like Gaston Fébus most certainly found himself faced with considerable expenses connected to the maintenance and upkeep of his estate and houses and the salary and equipment of his retinue, and would need to manage his estate wisely in order to uphold the standard of living that befitted a man of his status.

middle ages. 'Par sa mentalité Fébus appartient à la génération de ces hommes de la deuxième moitié du XIVe siècle avec toutes les contradictions imposées par une époque où le moyen age commençait à se défaire et où les Temps Modernes commençaient à apparaître,' he says.¹⁹⁸ A hundred years after Froissart another aristocratic writer,¹⁹⁹ Commynes, wrote, 'where the profit lies, there too is the honour'²⁰⁰ a comment which has been seen as an indication of the death of chivalry and the advent of a new era marked by the quest for material gain and increased focus on the importance of wealth, landed property and profitable investment. Froissart's perception of the importance of gain and profit might not be as strong as Commynes', but he clearly sees no opposition between the two when judging the actions of Gaston Fébus. Nor does he see a conflict between the noble quest for honour and professional estate management, and here he is supported by the words of his contemporary, Chastellain, who despite his focus on martial exploits says, 'After the deeds and exploits of war, which are claims to glory, the household is the first thing which strikes the eye, and that which it is, therefore, most necessary to conduct and arrange well'.²⁰¹ To Froissart, the success of Gaston Fébus in attending to the serious business of governing his estate and his realm added to his symbolic capital.

¹⁹⁸ Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Febus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siecle*. Pau 1976. p. 218. 'Fastueux comme les autre grands princes d'Occident il n'en gérait pas moins avec parcimonie son trésor, pierre angulaire de sa politique et n'hésita pas à faire preuve d'une avarice sordide pour le maintenir à un niveau très élevé. Issu d'une famille pyrénéenne relativement pauvre, il savait comme tous les montagnards que l'argent était dur à gagner, qu'il ne fallait pas le jeter par les fenêtres.'

¹⁹⁹ Stone, Lawrence: *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*. Princeton 1965. p. 160.

²⁰⁰ Commynes; Philippe de: *Memoires*. ed. Joel Blanchard. Paris 2001. V, 9. 'Car ceulx qui gaignent en ont tousjours l'honneur.'

²⁰¹ This reference is from Maurice Keen's book, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1990. p. 160.

Froissart's description of Gaston Fébus' cautious overlooking of his estate and bookkeeping has similarities to a different kind of historical writing in late medieval society: the merchant chronicle. In the *Ricordi of Giovanni de Pagolo Morelli* (1371-1441), Morelli says that he considers rigorous bookkeeping of prime importance, in addition to learning grammar and reading. When it comes to money and possessions, no one can take better care of one's own interests than oneself, states Morelli, thus revoking Gaston Fébus' personal engagement in his affairs. Morelli's text has been dealt with in Aron Gurevitch essay on the merchant. 'For Morelli', says Gurevitch, 'good was identified with profit, virtue was represented by balanced books, and evil by losses'.²⁰² Gurevitch also points out that Morelli possessed a profound 'awareness of the instability and the vulnerability of human life' and was an extremely cautious and prudent man in his business affairs.

According to Gurevitch this differed from the attitudes of the noble class: 'In spite of all his efforts to root himself in the structure of feudalism and adapt himself to it, the great merchant was a totally different psychological and social type from the feudal lord . . . '²⁰³ Judging from Froissart's portrayal of the Count, we might suspect that the two world-views were not as different as Gurevitch believed. Although the sum of the ideal qualities of a knight included courtesy, generosity, piety, valour and dexterity in arms, the ideal nobleman as Froissart describes him also possessed an awareness of the instability of human life and was eager to keep a cautious eye on the management of his estate.

Summing up the achievements of the Count, Tucoo-Chala states: 'Fébus fut pendant près de cinquante ans une sorte de prestidigitateur politique, d' une opportunisme

²⁰² Gurevitch, A.: 'The Merchant' in Le Goff, J. ed: *The Medieval World*. London 1990. p. 269.

²⁰³ Gurevitch, A.: 'The Merchant' in Le Goff, J., ed: *The Medieval World*. London 1990. p. 281.

redoubtable, profitant de la moindre faute adverse. En même temps il était animé par le souci constant de consolider ses moyens matériels, c'est-à-dire sa richesse car il avait compris que l'argent était devenu la base de tout pouvoir.²⁰⁴ In a rapidly changing world, states Tucoo-Chala, Fébus had to find his place.²⁰⁵ Based on the findings above, we might argue that it was not only Gaston Fébus, who seems to have adapted to a changing world. In fact, it may seem as Froissart too, adjusted his portrayal of the ideal knight to an ethos that no longer perceived preoccupation with money and profit to be beneath the dignity of a knight or king.

This might lead us to suspect that we ought to be cautious of believing that Froissart only celebrated actions in accordance with the traditional virtues associated with chivalry and that 'all which is not brilliance, light or exterior life escape him . . .'.²⁰⁶ This will further investigated in the following chapter.

²⁰⁴Tucoo-Chala, P.: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 36.

²⁰⁵Tucoo-Chala, P.: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 35.

²⁰⁶ Paris, Gaston and Jeanroy, Alfred: *Extraits des chroniqueurs français*, 12e édition, Paris 1927. p. 186. See note 14. p. 4. for a full quotation.

3. Chivalry and warfare

Large parts of the *Chroniques* are devoted to describing the warfare of the first phases of the war that has later been called the Hundred Years War, fought intermittently by France and England between 1337 and 1453. Although the background for the hostilities was primarily the struggle over the lands in Aquitaine which Philippe VI of France refused to return to Plantagenet rule and Edward III's later claim to the French throne, the importance of the Hundred Years War extended far beyond strictly military developments.²⁰⁷ Froissart's account contains descriptions of for instance the campaigns leading up to the battle of Sluys, Crécy, the sieges of Calais and Breteuil, the battle of Poitiers as well as numerous other acts of war. As we have already touched upon, the *Chroniques* also covers the warfare on the Iberian peninsula, in Flanders, Scotland and elsewhere.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ The Hundred Years War was perhaps the most important war in European history, says Clifford J. Rogers. It was amongst other things the midwife of the European "nation state", which would eventually become the dominant form of political organization over the entire world. The devastation which the *chevauchées* of Edward III and his lieutenants inflicted on France had the effect of putting that state on a new course towards absolutist centralism. The ransom of £500 000 for King Jean, captured at Poitiers in 1356 did more than any other single event to establish regular, national taxation in France, says Rogers, and the virtual collapse of the Valois royal government in 1358-60 cleared the ground for the construction of a new, stronger monarchical state in the reign of Charles the Wise. In England, the pressures of the Hundred Years war had an opposite effect on the political development, and during the reign of Edward III the English parliament became a truly powerful political body. Due to the extraordinarily expensive campaigns of Edward III, the Commons in particular gained parliamentary power. They granted him the tax he needed to uphold his warfare, but only on conditions. Edward had to renounce the king's old right to levy arbitrary tallages on his demesne lands and the royal boroughs, an example of how Edward III's conduct of the Hundred years War propelled the evolution of parliament into the first really powerful national representative assembly since classical times, says Rogers. See Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. pp. 1- 5.

²⁰⁸ For an overview of the real events and phases of the Hundred Years War, see Curry, Anne: *The Hundred Years War*. New York. 2003.

The characteristic strategic feature of the war was the cavalry raid - *chevauchée* - launched by the English from territory favourable to the English cause across France and the phase of the war that opened in 1337 and concluded in 1361 with the Treaty of Bretigny was marked by two disastrous French defeats at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) as well as the siege and capture of Calais by the English (1346 - 7). Froissart, who based his account of these events partially on Jean le Bel's *Chronique*, describes the battles, the siege and the events that led up to them, amply. Still, Froissart's account, especially of the battle of Poitiers is distinctly more elaborate than le Bel's, which makes up no more than 13 small pages in the SHF edition and contains little information about the battle itself.²⁰⁹ In comparison, Froissart's account covering approximately the same events makes up more than 80 full pages in the SHF edition of his work. Le Bel's account is also more directly favourable to the English King, which he claims was 'he who in this story had acted most nobly'.²¹⁰ In fact, le Bel in his evaluation of the French King, Philippe VI, states that the King acted cowardly on the advice of clerks and priests.²¹¹ Seemingly, this is an opinion Froissart did not share.

²⁰⁹ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Tome II. Chapitre XCIV.

²¹⁰ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Tome II. Chapitre LXX. 'Aucunes gens qui orront lire ceste hystoire se pourront esmerveillier pourquoy je appelle le roy d' Angleterre le noble roy Edowart et tout simplement je nomme le roy Philippe de France; si cuideroient et pourroient penser que je tendisse bende et partie. Sauve la grasce de chascun, je ne le fais pas porter partie, ains le fais pour honnourer celluy qui en ceste hystoire s'est porté le plus noblement; c'est le noble roy Edowart que on ne pourroit trop honnourer, car tousjours a creu bon conseil en ses besongnes, et ses gens, chevaliers et escuiers amé, et chascun selonc son estat honnoré, et bien deffendu son royaume contre ses anemis, et sur eulx conquesté assez, et son propre corps dedens son pays et dehors sans faintise avecq ses gens aventuré, et ses souldoiers et alliez bien payé et du syen largement donné; sy en doibt estre de tous moult volentiers servi et partout noble roy clamé.'

²¹¹ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Tome II. Chapitre LXX. ' Ce n'a pas fait le roy Philippe de France, ains a laissié son pays en pluseurs marches excillier et waster et s'est toutdis tenu entour Parys pour son corps aisier et de peril garder, et a tousjours creu povre conseil de clerks et de prelates, et mesmement ceulx qui luy disoient: "Cher sire, ne vous vueillez effreer, ne vostre personne aventurer, car à mesais vous pourrie de trahyson garder, on ne se scet en cui fier, mais laissiez ce joeune roy d' Angleterre en folie son temps user et son avoir despendre; il ne vous poeut, pour faire fumiere, desheriter, et quant il avra tout despendu, il luy en convendra retourner . . . '

Several historians have argued that the battle of Crécy and later the battle of Poitiers mark a break with previous chivalrous attitudes in war and pitched battles. While the French still upheld the chivalrous code of correct behaviour in war and would give their noble horsemen the most prominent place in the two battles, the English opted for what has been described as a far more rational and pragmatic approach, relying on their archers. This has led some researchers to conclude that Crécy and Poitiers mark the point where chivalry gave way to the 'cold practical spirit' of a more modern age. The feudal knight/warrior who genuinely was 'but an imitation of the host of angels around God's throne'²¹² had lost his position and was 'merging into the soldier of modern times'.²¹³ A 'gap' is said to have opened up between chivalrous ideal and military practice, a gap chroniclers like Froissart were unable to hide in their accounts.

Opinions like these are based on the general assumption that strategy and tactics were of little importance in traditional medieval warfare. Georges Duby, for instance in his famous book *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde*, claimed that the Marshal and other knights of his age were ' . . . to meet the opponent, not like foxes, but as lions, in the open field, without laying traps, openly arranged for battle.'²¹⁴ William Marshal was driven by the quest for honour, says Duby, a quest that obliged him to an audacity verging on insanity. In one of the first larger works on medieval warfare, *History of the Art of War*, Hans Delbrück claimed that unlike their Roman predecessors, medieval warriors had neither interest nor skill when it

²¹² Huizinga, Johan: *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth 1965. p. 65.

²¹³ Huizinga, Johan: *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. Harmondsworth 1965. p. 73.

²¹⁴ Duby, Georges: *Verdens beste ridder. Historien om William Marskalken*. Oslo 1985. p. 80. Published first in France as *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde*. Paris 1984.

came to tactical warfare.²¹⁵ Instead, the medieval knight wanted to gain personal acclaim and honour. This is a view shared by John Keegan who in *The Face of Battle* says that he doubts that military planning and strategic leadership were present in medieval warfare.²¹⁶ Similarly, Michael Howard in *War in European History* argued that professional military competence became part of warfare again for the first time after the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.²¹⁷ The medieval warrior - the knight - focused primarily on chivalrous display, not the outcome of a siege or a battle.²¹⁸

Other researchers have voiced more nuanced views. In *War in the Middle Ages*, published in 1984, Philippe Contamine shares the view that the warfare of the middle ages was essentially marked by individual prowess, the anarchistic sense of honour and the private pursuit for booty and ransoms. Most often the warriors' chief concern was to find an adversary worthy of their rank of valour without any concern for their companions in arms. Still, says Contamine, we cannot leave a medieval gap in a list of military talents from Caesar to the sixteenth century.²¹⁹ Contamine also argues that war changed considerably in the second half of the

²¹⁵ Delbrück, Hans: *History of the Art of War*. Vol. III.

²¹⁶ Keegan, John: *The Face of Battle*. Harmondsworth 1978. p. 336.

²¹⁷ Howard, Michael: *War in European History*. London 1976. p. 29.

²¹⁸ Views like these were based on the work by for instance B. H. Liddell Hart who claimed that the military spirit of the feudal chivalry to be inimical to art, 'although the drab stupidity of its military course is lightened by a few bright gleams'. In his book *Des principes de la guerre à travers les ages* Van Overstraeten wrote that 'never was the art of war so imperfect or primitive, startling proof that a martial spirit and individual valour can achieve nothing without good organization and solid discipline', while Muraise claimed the arrangements for battles to be 'gross, the sequence of action very clumsy, the manoeuvres summary, the co-operation between units limited or non-existent'. See B. H. Liddell Hart in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Coronation edn. 1937, xxi. 456, cf. 16th edn. 1948, xxi. 456. Van Overstraeten, R.: *Des principes de la guerre à travers les ages*. Brussels 1926, i. 30. Muraise, E.: *Introduction à l'histoire militaire*. Paris 1964, pp.254 and 257-8. For a more extensive overview of this discussion see Contamine, Philippe: *War in the Middle Ages*. Oxford 1996 (1986). pp 208 - 9.

²¹⁹ Contamine, Philippe: *War in the Middle Ages*. Oxford 1996 (1986). p. 237.

fourteenth century in the sense that we see more military discipline and a sense of duty and obedience to higher-ranking officers. To be chivalrous was to be unprofessional in the quest for victory, and thus to be handicapped, says Contamine. In the fifteenth century, however, one could no longer afford to be unprofessional.²²⁰

As already mentioned in the Introduction, Pierre Tucoo-Chala in his book on Gaston Fébus states that the change in attitudes towards war took place even earlier than the second half of the fourteenth century, and by the time of the two great pitched battles at Crécy and Poitiers the chivalrous world was dominated by men who operated in different mental universes. While John the Good of France was an idealist, who like his predecessors would go to any length to act in accordance with the chivalrous code of honour, disregarding strategic consideration, Edward III of England and his son were pragmatists who would try to combine chivalry and strategy. As a result, the outcome of the encounters between the English and the French was given in advance, says Tucoo-Chala.²²¹

In his book *War Cruel and Sharp* from 2000, Clifford J. Rogers goes against the view that rulers and commanders during the Hundred Years War had no concept of strategy; that they were driven solely by misplaced chivalric ideals; that they thought of little except displaying their knightly skills and personal bravery in the *mêlée*. 'Historians in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, men like Sir Charles Oman, J. M. Tourneur-Aumont, and Sir Basil Liddell-Hart, concluded that the

²²⁰ Contamine, Philippe: *War in the Middle Ages*. Oxford 1996 (1986) p. 209. Nevertheless, in *War in the Middle Ages* Contamine argues that it is not impossible (a) to gather some of the very general principles of medieval tactics; (b) to examine campaigns whose progress implies certain directional ideas, or a strategy; (c) to list a fairly extensive series of responses and procedures used, according to circumstance during pitched battles; and (d) to admit that with regard to mental attitudes, medieval soldiers had a clear idea of the advantages of having recourse to a fund of practical experiences and theoretical reflections as complete and varied as possible.

²²¹ Tucoo-Chala, Pierre: *Gaston Fébus - Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*. Pau 1976. p. 35.

chevauchées of the fourteenth century were nothing but "purposeless parades" displaying an "absence of strategy of policy, of any thought at all," and that "in the Hundred Years' War there is nothing to learn, save negatively," from the strategy of Edward III and the Black Prince,' says Rogers.²²² In fact, he says, views diminishing the strategic skills and ambitions of Edward III and his son appear regularly in the works of military historians not specializing in the middle ages.²²³ However, what these researchers disregard, according to Rogers, is that the Treaty of Brétigny, which ceded a third of France to be ruled by Edward III in full sovereignty, was unquestionable one of the greatest strategic victories of the age.

Rogers also opposes another persistent view amongst military historians, namely that war in the middle ages was primarily an affair of sieges and devastating raids, not battles, and that Edward III and his son, almost cowardly, did not actively seek battle when ravaging enemy territory. Although historians are right not to focus too narrowly on the clash of armies in open battle, prominent researchers have seriously overreacted to previous research when they removed the quest for decisive battle from medieval strategy, argues Rogers, who in his analysis wants to show that the *chevauchées* of Edward III and his son were meant as provocations intended to force the Valois into attacking the English army in the field. Indeed, says Rogers, even the major sieges of Edward III's reign were intended to accomplish this goal of bringing his enemies to battle, more than capture strategic strongholds. However, this eagerness to bring his enemies to battle, often overlooked by historians, should not be seen as the result of wanting to adhere to a chivalrous ideal, but as being strategically founded on the belief that only by meeting the French face to face could decisive victory be won. Some of Edward's manoeuvres, which have been judged

²²² Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. pp. 7 - 8.

²²³ For an overview of this debate as well as references to their works see Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. pp. 230 - 34.

evasive, illogical, "obscure" or "surprising"²²⁴ by modern historians, and thus, seen as testimonies of the lack of strategic and tactical skills of the men involved, were in fact intended to control where and when a battle took place, says Rogers.²²⁵

In *The Battle of Poitiers 1356*, David Green argues that the battle of Crécy marked a change in European strategic and tactical decision-making, and although it was not the first campaign to put into practice the developments described as the 'Edwardian revolution', it established the *chevauchée* as the predominant means of waging war in France and proved the advantage of mixed retinues of men-at-arms, infantry and archers fighting in a defensive formation and situation, says Green.²²⁶ According to Green, the war itself encouraged change both on the battlefield and the means by which troops were supplied, armed and recruited, a development that gathered further momentum with the development of effective artillery in the fifteenth century.

Thus, as we may see, recent work by military historians suggests that the warfare of the Hundred years war was by no means hasty, instinctive and confused confrontations in which captains played the role of simple leaders of men, and where the combatants chief concern was to get the possibility to show their valour. On the contrary, it is possible to examine campaigns whose progress implies certain directional ideas, or a strategy and tactical consideration and dispositions.

²²⁴ Barber, Richard: *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*. New York 1978. pp. 7 - 8.

²²⁵ Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. pp. 230 - 34. 'Considering that . . . most of the contemporary sources claim that the English did everything they could to provoke the French into giving battle, it may seem puzzling that so many historians hold the opposite view,' says Rogers. Although the English army before Crécy was deficient in numbers, this could be compensated for by superiority in tactics, equipment, discipline, leadership and morale. In Rogers opinion, there can be no doubt that Edward III in addition to being able to encourage his men to brave battle, was an outstanding strategist capable of tactical judgement and leadership which surpassed his oponent.

²²⁶ Green, David: *The Battle of Poitiers. 1356*. Stroud 2002. pp. 79 - 80.

According to Clifford Rogers, evidence for this is found in letters, diaries and petitions to parliament but also to some extent in the narrative sources of the age. In the following I will take a closer look on Froissart's description of war and warfare, especially the campaigns that led up to the two famous battles at Crécy and Poitiers, the battles themselves and the siege of Calais. My aim will not be to study to what extent strategic consideration and tactics in reality was part of the warfare. The goal of my examination will be to see to what extent Froissart has described strategy and tactics in his account and what values and actions he admired and described in connection to warfare. Is his perspective essentially chivalrous in the sense that he mainly describes actions and events that celebrate individual prowess and behaviour in accordance with the traditional chivalrous virtues - the behaviour of the 'idealists' as Tucoc-Chala calls them?

3.1. The campaign of Crécy - the *chevauchée* and the battle

One of the lengthiest accounts of warfare in the *Chroniques* is the description of Edward III's invasion of France in 1346 and the battle of Crécy. However, before I start examining the description of the events in the *Chroniques*, it may be useful to give a short overview of what modern historians say were the reasons for Edward's invasion in 1346.

Edward III and Philippe VI of France had been at war since 1337, and according to Anne Curry the origins of the conflict were both feudal and dynastic.²²⁷ In 1337 Edward held the county of Ponthieu and also bore the title Duke of Aquitaine. Still, the English holdings in France were considerably smaller than they had been at the end of the twelfth century, when Henry II held the whole of western France. But although things had changed, two basic issues of English royal lands in France

²²⁷ Curry, Anne: *The Hundred Years War*. New York. 2003. p. 40.

remained the same, says Curry: the relationship between the kings of England and France that their tenure generated, and their rightful extent. By 1337 the issues had been so long running and had repeatedly proved themselves incapable of lasting settlement that an escalation of the conflict seemed inevitable. However, there was also another issue - the right to the throne of France.

When Charles IV, last of the direct line of Capetian kings of France, died, his cousin, Philippe, Count of Valois, followed him. But Philippe was not the only male with a claim to the throne. Also Edward III, nephew of Charles IV through his mother Isabella, had a claim worth advancing, seeing that a nephew was nearer in blood than a cousin. Although women had been excluded from the succession in 1317 when Philippe V was crowned after the death of his brother Louis X, nothing had been said about their right to transmit a claim to their male heirs.²²⁸ However, at the time of the coronation of Philippe VI, the English were unable to advance this claim properly.²²⁹ 'The failure on the part of the English to press Edward's claim was a notable factor in Philippe's favour', says Curry, and Philippe pressed forward in order to get Edward III to do homage for the land held on the continent.

Edward did pay simple homage for Aquitaine and Ponthieu on the 6th of June 1329, an event related by Froissart who says that Philippe received the young King of England with all honour and dignity.²³⁰ However, says Froissart, he believed that the

²²⁸ According to Anne Curry, there is no proof that the French were at this time consciously following Salic Law: 'The idea that Salic Law prevented women even transmitting claims was, largely invented by the French in late fourteenth and early fifteenth century as retrospective justification for Valois tenure of the throne', says Curry. See Curry, Anne: *The Hundred Years War*. New York. 2003. p. 40.

²²⁹ If the claim was seriously entertained by Isabella and her party why was it not followed up? asks Curry, who points out both the uncertainty of support in the Low Countries and the situation in Scotland as important factors. See Curry, Anne: *The Hundred Years War*. New York. 2003. p. 41.

²³⁰ *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 45. 'Se li rois Phelippes reçut honnourablement et grandement le jone roy d' Engleterre, son cousin, ce ne fait mies à demander.'

English king paid homage with words and a kiss only, without putting his hands between the hands of the King of France.²³¹ Wanting to see and study earlier charters that would throw light on the matter, and gain a better understanding of how and in what respect the King of England should declare himself the man of the King of France, Edward refused to proceed any further. The King of France accepted this, says Froissart, because the King saw that his cousin of England was 'young', a comment indicating that the French king in the beginning, at least, was willing to be lenient with his young cousin.²³²

Some time after this, Edward did liege homage in a letter to Philippe, an event also reported by Froissart.²³³ But in spite of this apparent agreement there was war once again in 1337, and according to Anne Curry this was due to four factors. One of them was that French officials continued to act aggressively in Gascony, another that the Anglo-Scottish war had reopened. Another catalyst, according to Curry, was papal policy. Benedict XII wanted to facilitate plans of a crusade, but when these plans fell through, Philippe moved his crusading fleet to the Channel ports, presumably in the aid of the Scots. Finally came the case of Robert of Artois, she says, an affair also related by Froissart.

Robert was Philippe's cousin and had been a vital supporter for Philippe at the beginning of his reign. In fact, according to Froissart, he was the man who had

²³¹ *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 45. 'Là en dedens eut ça mainte parolle et ordenance faite et devisée. Et me samble que li rois Edouwars d' Engleterre fist adonc hommage, de bouce et de parolle tant seulement, sans les mains mettre entre les mains dou roy de France, ou prince ou prelat deputé de par lui.'

²³² *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 45. 'Li rois de France, qui veoit le roy d' Engleterre son cousin jone, entendi bien toutes ces parolles, et le volt adonc de riens presser, car bien savoit assés que bien y recoueroit, quant il vorroit . . . '

²³³. *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 46.

helped Philippe most in gaining the French throne.²³⁴ Without him, nothing was done, states the chronicler who says little of the causes of the discord except for the fact that Robert had put forward a letter, which was proved false.²³⁵ According to Curry, Robert had tried to secure himself the inheritance of the county of Artois, which had been given to his aunt, and was later accused of his aunt's murder. Robert was condemned to death, but managed to escape to the Low Countries and later to England where he was well received by Edward. This further enraged Philippe who sent a summons to Edward to surrender Robert to French justice. On the grounds that Edward was harbouring Robert, Philippe confiscated the duchy of Aquitaine.²³⁶

According to Clifford Rogers, the fact that the demand to surrender Robert of Artois had been addressed to the seneschal of Gascony, signified that this was not a request of a king to king, but an order of liege-lord to vassal. Since Robert was in England and not in Guyenne or Aquitaine, the action was highly symbolic. To surrender Robert of Artois would be a full admission that the consequences of Edward's homage to Philippe extended even into his own realm, a principle that Edward could by no means afford to concede, says Rogers.²³⁷ War could no longer be prevented. However, according to Curry, Edward remained reluctant to go very far in his claim to the throne for a long time after this, and still stressed Philippe's usurpation of his rights in Gascony and interference in Scottish affairs as the main reasons for the war.

Froissart's account of the events that lead up to the campaign in 1346 is far less clear and the intentions of the two kings remain somewhat obscure. This is also the case

²³⁴ *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 48.

²³⁵ *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre I. § 48. 'Et fu, bien l'espace de trois ans, que en France estoit tout fait par lui [Robert d'Artois] et sans lui n'estoit rien fait.'

²³⁶ Curry, Anne: *The Hundred Years War*. New York. 2003. pp. 44 -45.

²³⁷ Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. pp. 123 - 24.

when it comes to Edward's claim to the French throne, although he mentions at an early stage that many English noblemen murmured that their king was closer to 'l'iretage de France' than Philippe.²³⁸ According to Froissart, Edward adopted the title King of France rather reluctantly, pushed by Jean van Artevelde, the burgher's leader who led a strong force of Flemings willing to support Edward. However, they could not do so, van Artevelde explained, before Edward had agreed to claim himself the rightful heir to the French throne.²³⁹ According to Clifford Rogers, Edward had seriously considered making the claim as early as 1337, and was in fact eager to do so.²⁴⁰ The reason why Froissart has chosen to show Edward as virtually being pushed into making his claim is unclear although it could be that the author may have felt reluctant to disclose the ambitions of the English king. As we will see later, Froissart also portrays Henry of Derby, who should become Henry IV, as rather unwilling to accept the English crown and instead shows Henry as being virtually forced to action by the mighty burghers of London.

However, in spite of the differences between the description of the intentions and motives of Edward III, both the modern historians, Rogers and Curry, and Froissart make the same point; namely that the main reason he took this major step was the chance to secure an alliance with the people of Flanders. Having been able to secure the aid of several prominent rulers in the Low Countries, amongst them the duke of

²³⁸ *Chroniques. Livres I et II. Livre I. § 46.*

²³⁹ *Chroniques. Livres I et II. Livre I. § 88.* 'Ceste parolle entendirent li Flamench volentiers . . . il respondirent et disent: " . . . nous ne poons esmouvoir guerre au roy de France, quiconques le soit, car nous sommes obligiet à çou, par foy et par sierement, et sus deus millions de florins à le cambre dou pape, . . . Mais se vous voliés faire une cose que nous vous dirons, vous y pourveriés bien de remède et de conseil. C'est que vous voelliés enchargier les armes de France et esquarter d'Engleterre, et vous appellés rois de France. . . Par ensi serons nous absolz et dispensés, et irons partout là où vous vorrés et ordonnerés.'

²⁴⁰ Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360.* Woodbridge 2000. pp. 179 - 82.

Brabant, the margrave of Juliers and the count of Hainault,²⁴¹ Edward could start planning how to bring his challenge to conclusion.²⁴²

In keeping with his description of the ambitions of Edward being slightly more modest than might have been the case, Froissart describes the campaign leading up to the battle of Crécy, not as a direct attack on the French king, but originally planned as a relief expedition to Gascony where for some time Henry of Derby (not to be confused with the later Henry of Derby who was to become Henry IV) had tried to repel French encroachments in Aquitaine.²⁴³ King Philippe, furious after Edward's retraction of his homage, had declared the duchy confiscated and had laid siege to the castle of Aigullon, a siege the Count of Derby was not able to raise. When the King of England heard how hard pressed his men were in Aiguillon, he decided to assemble a large army and lead it to Gascony. But the winds were not favourable and prevented Edward and his army from going to Gascony, says Froissart, whose description at this point differs from the account given by Jean le Bel.²⁴⁴ Instead, Edward received advice from Sir Godfrey of Harcourt, an exiled Norman lord, that he should change his plans and land in Normandy where the English army began what cannot be described in terms other than a huge pillaging raid.

²⁴¹ Clifford Rogers outlines the arrangements made with these in the chapter 'Strategy and Edward III's Diplomacy' in Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360.* Woodbridge 2000. pp. 129 - 56.

²⁴² However it took some time before Edward was able to raise an army. In fact, according to Rogers, it took so long that his allies and well-wishers on the Continent became upset and on the point of giving up the whole business. Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360.* Woodbridge 2000. p. 145.

²⁴³ For a modern overview of the chevauchée, see Plaisse, André: *À Travers le Cotentin. La Grande chevauchée guerrière d'Edouard III en 1346.* Cherbourg. 1994.

²⁴⁴ Jean le Bel says that Edward first landed on Guernsey where he took the castle and found a 'tres grand tresor'. See Jean le Bel: *Chronique.* SHF. Tome I. XIII. pp. 69 - 71.

The army moved forward by land and sea until they reached Barfleur, says Froissart, a seaport and fortified town, which they took immediately because the inhabitants surrendered in the hope of saving their lives.²⁴⁵ The town was emptied of gold, silver and jewellery, of which the army found so much 'that even servants turned up their noses at fur-lined gowns,' says the author. Thereafter, all the men in the town were taken and put on board the English ships, so that they could not attack the army in the rear. According to Froissart, the plundering army spread out over the country and did whatever they pleased, until they reached Cherbourg, a large wealthy town and port.²⁴⁶ This was attacked and burnt, but having found the citadel too strongly defended to be taken, the army continued towards Montbourg and Valogne. This last town they sacked completely and then set fire to it, states Froissart who also says that the army did the same to a number of other towns in the region, continuing to take so much valuable booty 'that no man alive can imagine the great riches taken.'²⁴⁷

Froissart also relates how Edward had disposed his troops so that one of his marshals, the Earl of Warwick, lead a column that rode along the sea-side, while Godfrey of Harcourt, who knew the country well, lead the host on the left hand. They found riches everywhere, granges full of corn, houses full of all riches, rich burgesses, carts, chariots and animals that were brought to the king. However, 'the men said nothing of all the gold and silver they found', states the author laconically

²⁴⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 256. 'Arcier et gens de piet aloient de costet selonch le marine, et reuboient, pillioient et prenoient tout che qu'il trouvoient. Et tant alerent et cil de mer et cil de terre qu'il vinrent à un port de mer et une forte ville que on clame Barflues; et le conquissent tantost, car li bourgeois se rendirent pour le doubtance de mort. Mès pour ce, ne demora mies que toute la ville ne fust reubée, et pris or et argent et chiers jeuiaulz car il en trouvèrent si grant fusion, que garçon n'avoient cure de draps fourés de vair.'

²⁴⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 256 - 57. 'Apriès ce que la ville de Barflues fu prise et reubée sans ardoir, il s'espardirent parmi le pays selonch la marine. Si y fist une grant part de leurs volontés, car il ne trouvèrent homme qui leur deveast. Et alèrent tant qu' il vinrent jusques à une bonne ville grosse et riche et port de mer, qui s'appelle Chierebourch'.

²⁴⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 260. ' . . . il n'est homs vivans qui poroit croire ne penser le grant avoir qui là fu gaagniés et robés, et le grant fuison de bons draps qu'il y trouvèrent.'

thus, indicating that in an army such as Edward's not every soldier was as honourable and loyal as one should hope.²⁴⁸ In this way, was the good and rich land of Normandy burnt and pillaged, he says, until news of the devastation of the English army reached the King of France who was highly displeased and 'swore to bring the English king to battle'.²⁴⁹

Philippe urgently had letters sent to his allies requesting them to join him with all their available forces in the campaign he was preparing against the English, says Froissart, who continues to list the names of many of Philippe's allies and the splendid forces they turned up with.²⁵⁰ Especially Sir John of Hainault who had recently become Philippe's ally through the influence of his son-in-law, Count Louis of Blois, responded by bringing a large and well equipped force, states the author who does not question the actions of John who had helped Queen Isabella in overthrowing her husband Edward II and installing her young son, Edward III, on the throne of England, an affair related at the beginning of Froissart's chronicles.²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 258. 'Si trouvèrent le pays gras et plentives de toutes choses, les gragnes plainnes de blés, les maisons plainnes de toutes rikèces, riches bourgeois, chars, charètes, et chevaus, pourciaus, brebis et moutons et les plus biaux bues dou monde que on nourist ens ou pays. Mais li varlet ne donnoient point, ne rendoient as gens le roy l'or et l'argent qu'il trouvoient; ançois le retenoient pour yaus.'

²⁴⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 259. 'Dont les plaintes et les nouvelles vinrent au roy de France, qui se tenoit en le cité de Paris, comment li rois d' Engleterre estoit arrivés en Constantin et gastoit tout devant lui, à destre et à senestre. Dont dist li rois Phelippes et jura que jamais ne retourroient li Englès si aroient esté combatu, et les destourbiers et anois qu'il faisoient à [ses] gens leur seroient chier vendu.'

²⁵⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 259. 'Si fist tantost et sans delay li dis roy lettres escrire à grant fuison. Et envoya premierement devers ses bons amis de l'Empire, pour tant qu'il li estoient plus lointain: premierement au gentil roy de Behagne que moult amoit . . . Li dessus nommet signeur ne se veurent mies excuser, mès fisent leur amas de gens d'armes, d'Alemans et de Behagnons et de Lussemboursins, et s'en vinrent en France devers le roy efforcement.'

²⁵¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 259: 'Encores escrisi li rois et manda especialement monsigneur Jehan de Hayneu, qui nouvellement s'estoit alliées à lui . . . Si vint li gentilz sires de Byaumont, messires Jehans de Haynau, servir le roy de France moult estoffement et à grant fuison de bonne bacelerie de le conté de Haynau et d'ailleurs: dont li rois eut grant joie de sa venue, et le retint pour son corps et de son plus privet et especial conseil.'

On the contrary, John of Hainault is a man Froissart clearly admired. But although Philippe's allies readily agreed to help him, it took a long time for the French to gather their forces and in the meantime the English continued their ravaging, says Froissart, who is far less negative in his judgement of how long it took Philippe to gather an army to go against the pillaging English force than le Bel who consistently describes Philippe as irresolute and slow to move.²⁵²

Especially brutal was the sack of Caen, where the Count of Eu and Guines, who was Constable of France, and the Count of Tancarville were waiting with their troops. Edward advanced cautiously, according to the author, and ordered his columns to join up. He also kept his fleet close to him.²⁵³ Knowing that the English were approaching, says Froissart, the Constable and the Count of Tancarville got armed and ordered their men and the townspeople to do the same. They also held a council to decide their plan of action, and according to Froissart, the two noblemen proposed to abandon the outskirts of the town to the English and concentrate their forces in the town to hold the gates. This was not accepted by the townspeople who would rather meet the English face to face in the fields.²⁵⁴ This reluctance to heed the noblemen's advice should cost them dearly, as Froissart's following account shows.

²⁵² Le Bel describes Philip's reaction to the ravaging of Normandy in this manner: 'L'aultre merveille, sy est quant le pont fut refait, comment le roy Philippe, qui estoit à Parys, à VII petites lyewes prez, à tout son plus gran pouoir de seigneurs et de gens d'armes, et qu'il avoit mandé pour deffendre son pays, comment fut ce qu'il n'ala courir sus ces anemis qui luy faisoient voler la fumiere et les flamesches par dessus sa teste à Parys, ou au mains qu'il fust venu deffendre le passage.' Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre LXXI. p. 86.

²⁵³ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 261. 'Si chevauçà elle part tout sagement, et remist ses batailles ensamble . . . Et tousjours le suivoit et costioit sa navire . . .'

²⁵⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 261. 'Li connestables de France et li aultre signeur, qui là estoient assamblé . . . s' armèrent et fissent armer leurs gens et tous les bourgeois de le ville, et puis se traient en conseil ensamble pour savoir comment il se maintenoient. Si fu donc li intention et ordenance dou connestable de France et dou conte de Tankarville, que nulz ne vuidast le ville, mais gardaissent les portes et le pont et le rivière . . . Chil de le ville respondirent qu'il ne feroient mies ensi, et qu'il se traioient sus les camps et attendroient la poissance dou roy d' Engleterre, car il estoit gens et fors assés pour le combatre.'

When the townsmen saw the English drawn up in three solid, close-ordered divisions and all the banners and pennons fluttering in the wind, their courage forsook them, says Froissart.²⁵⁵ The townspeople fled, and a truly horrible carnage began. The Constable and the Count who barely escaped to safety, could do nothing but watch the massacre, and began to fear that they might fall into the hands of archers 'who did not know who they were'.²⁵⁶ Luckily, says Froissart, they spotted a gallant English knight, Sir Thomas Holland who they recognized because they had campaigned together in Granada and Prussia 'in the way in which knight meet each other'.²⁵⁷ The French noblemen called out to Holland and proposed that he make them his prisoners, a proposition he readily accepted. Not only because he could save their lives, says the author, but also because they were valuable prisoners, 'enough to bring in a hundred thousand gold moutons'.²⁵⁸ The fact that Thomas Holland was able to make a good profit from his noble prisoners is however, not condemned by the chronicler, who later says that Thomas Holland was able to

²⁵⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Si trestost que chil bourgeois de le ville de Kem veirent approcier ces Englès qui venoient en trois batailles drut et sieret, et perchurent ces banières et ces pennons à grant fuison bauloier et venteler, et oïrent ces arciers ruire qu'il n'avoient point acoustumé de veir ne de sentir, si furent si effraet et si desconfi d'yaus meismes, que tout cil dou monde ne les euissent mies retenus qu'il ne se fuissent mis à la fuite.'

²⁵⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Dont il avint que li connestables de France et li contes de Tankarville, qui estoient monté en celle porte au piet dou pont à sauveté, regardoient au lonch et amont le rue, et veioient si grant pestilence et tribulation que grans hideurs estoit à considerer et imaginer. Si se doubtèrent d'eulz meismes que il n'escheissent en ce partie et entre mains d'arciers, qui point ne les cognussent.'

²⁵⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Ensi que il regardoient aval en grant doubte ces gens tuer, il perçurent un gentil chevalier englès, qui n' avoit c'un oel, que on clamoit monsigneur Thumas de Hollandes . . . : lequel Thumas raviserent bien, car il s'estoient aultre fois veu et compagniet l'un l'autre à Grenade en en Prusse et en aultres voïages, ensi que chevalier se truevent.'

²⁵⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Quant li dis messires Thomas oy ceste parolle, si fu tous joians, tant pour ce que il les pooit sauver que pour ce qu'il avoit, en yaus prendre, une belle aventure de bons prisonniers, pour avoir cent mil moutons.' According to Clifford J. Rogers, Sir Thomas Holland gained 80 000 florins for the ransom of the Count of Eu. Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. p. 284.

prevent many cruel and horrible acts which would otherwise have been committed, 'giving proof of his nobleness'.²⁵⁹ Also other English noblemen showed clemency and were able to prevent 'a number of evil deeds and rescued many pretty women and nuns from rape'.²⁶⁰

However, in spite of their initial fear and flight, the townspeople also made the English suffer, and King Edward, according to Froissart (and not le Bel) was enraged when his losses were reported to him. Wanting to put all the townspeople to the sword, the King was only appeased when Sir Godfrey of Harcourt pointed out that such actions would be detrimental to the King's expedition. 'You have still a great voyage to make before you reach Calais . . . there is still plenty of fighting before you, and you will need all the forces you have', Harcourt is reported to have said.²⁶¹ Seeing that Harcourt was right, Edward abandoned his intention, and was well rewarded. The townspeople opened their chests, many gave up everything they had, and Edward was able to send back his fleet full of conquered spoils and of good prisoners, 'including more than sixty knights and three hundred wealthy citizens,

²⁵⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Et destourna ce jour à faire mainte cruaulté et plusieurs horribles fais qui eussent estet fait, se il ne fust alés au devant: dont il fist aumosne et gentillèce.'

²⁶⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. 'Avoecques le dit monsieur Thumas de Hollandes avoit plusieurs gentilz chevalier d' Engleterre qui gardèrent et esconsèrent tamaint meschief à faire, et mainte belle bourgoise et tamainte dame d'enclostre à violer.'

²⁶¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. ' . . . li rois d'Engleterre fu trop durement courociés au soir, quant on l'en dist le verité. Et ordonna et commanda que, à l'endemain, on parmesist tout à l'espée, et le ditte ville en feu et en flame. Mès messires Godefrois de Harcourt ala au devant de ceste ordenance et dist: "Chiers sires, voelliés affrener un petit vostre corage, et vous souffise ce que vous en avés fait. Vous avez encores à faire un moult grant voiage, ançois que vous soiiés devant Calais, où vous tirés à venir . . . Car il ne poet estre que vos adversaires li rois Phelippes ne doie chevaucier contre vous à tout son effort, et combatre à quel fin que soit. Et trouverés encores des destrois, des passages, des assaus et des rencontres plusieurs, par quoi les gens que vous avés et plus encores vous feront bien mestier."

with a host of loving greetings to his wife, my lady Philippa', says Froissart who at no point indicates that he found the pillaging in opposition to the rules of chivalry.²⁶²

The description of Edward's *chevauchée* in Normandy and the sack of Caen give vital information about the author's perception of the events and actions of one of the men he praises the most, Edward III. First of all, we may notice that although the author relates that Edward was in his prime and desired to meet his enemy in battle, he also planned his expedition carefully with the help of his trusted men and especially Godfrey of Harcourt. According to Clifford Rogers, the campaign was probably intended to provoke Philippe to battle, and this could very well be true. However, Froissart does not mention such a clear intention. Instead the author's focus when relating Harcourt's motivation for landing in Normandy, seems to be the rich plunder that could be won. Pointing out that the towns of Normandy would be virtually undefended and full of wealth and riches - 'enough to make Edward and his men rich for twenty years to come' - Harcourt was able to persuade Edward to change his course from Gascony to Normandy, a decision not questioned or condemned by the author. To seek gain and plunder was clearly not in opposition to the chivalrous code as he saw it. On the contrary, Froissart relates the ravaging and pillaging of Normandy without a word of condemnation and seems to admire the effectiveness of the army and how well Edward administered his forces.

Contrary to what we might have expected there is little focus on prowess and chivalrous fighting in Froissart's account at this point. Although the brave actions of some of the chevaliers on both sides are mentioned, the bravery shown by the knights was clearly not the main theme of his account at this point. Instead, we hear of pillaging and arson. Thus, Froissart's description of the *chevauchée* shows that we

²⁶² SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 263. 'Ensi ordonna li rois d' Engleterre ses besongnes, estans en le ville de Kem, et renvoia se navie cargie d'or et d'avoir conquis et de bons prisonniers, dont il y avoit jà plus de soissante chevaliers, et trois cens riches bourgeois, et avoech ce grant fuison de salus et d'amistés à sa femme, la gentilz royne d' Engleterre, madame Phelippe.'

ought to be cautious of believing that the author only described noblemen in accordance with a very rigid definition of the chivalrous ideal.

This is also seen in the rest of Froissart's account of the campaign leading up to the battle of Crécy. According to the author, Edward and his army ravaged the country west of the Seine and struck south as far as the walls of Paris, then turned northeast.²⁶³ This spurred Philippe to come after him, and Froissart describes how the King of France openly proclaimed his willingness to fight in a speech to the people of Paris.²⁶⁴ In the meantime, Edward 'well aware that the King of France was following him' wanted to find a way to cross the River Somme, says Froissart.²⁶⁵ Having received advice from a young groom, the English army crossed the river at Abbeville where they also defeated a notable French knight, Sir Godemar du Fay, who had been sent by Philippe to guard the crossing. When news reached Philippe that the English army had been able to cross the river, he got extremely angry, says Froissart, because he had expected to find his opponent on the bank of the Somme and fight them there.²⁶⁶

The English on their side was full of confidence, says the chronicler, and the King of England thanked and praised God many times that day for bringing him safely

²⁶³ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 263 - 270.

²⁶⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 263: 'Donc respondi li rois et dist: "Ma bonne gent, ne vous doubtés de riens. Jà li Englès ne vous approceront de plus priès. Je m'en vois jusques à Saint Denis devers mes gens d'armes, car je voel chevaucier contre les Englès et les combaterai, comment qu'il soit." ' Not surprisingly, this is a passage not found in le Bel's account where the author seems more determined to portray Philippe in a less favourable light.

²⁶⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 272. 'Or parlerons dou roy d' Engleterre qui estoit arrestés à Arainnes, si com vous avés oy, et avoit moult bien entendu que li rois de France le sievoit o tout son effort; et si ne savoit encores là où il poroit passe le rivièrre de Somme. . . '

²⁶⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 270. 'Des ces nouvelles fu li rois de France moult courociés, car il cuidoit bien trouver les Englès sus le rivage de Somme, et là combatre.'

across the river.²⁶⁷ As we saw above, Godfrey of Harcourt says that Edward's intention was to reach Calais, and from what we can gather from Froissart's account the English were not actively seeking out the French. However, there is no indication that Froissart believed the English to be literally fleeing from the much superior French army either. On the contrary, the English army seems to have taken the time to pillage and plunder several small towns north of the river Somme. Sparing the town of Noyelle, which belonged to the sister of the late Robert of Artois, most of the army halted in the open country near La Broye, while the Marshals made an incursion to Crotoy on the coast, which they burnt to the ground, says Froissart.²⁶⁸ The next day, they moved towards Crécy in Ponthieu where Edward halted and gave a speech to his men stating that he would take up his position there and wait for Philippe to come and fight. 'I am on the land lawfully inherited from my royal mother, . . . ready to defend my claim against my adversary Philippe of Valois', Edward is reported to have said.²⁶⁹

Edward rose early in the morning says Froissart, and heard mass with his son, Edward, Prince of Wales. After mass, Edward rode cheerfully on a little white palfrey amongst his men encouraging them to fight for his cause and inheritance. He spoke amicably and laughingly at them all and even the most disheartened would have plucked up the courage on hearing him, says Froissart, thus showing the

²⁶⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 271. 'Et regratia et loa Dieu li rois d'Engleterre ce jour plusieurs fois, quant si grant grace li avoit fait que trouvet passage bon et seur et conquis sus ses ennemis, et desconfis par bataille.'

²⁶⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 271

²⁶⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 272.' Si dist adonc li rois d'Engleterre à ses gens: "Prendons chi place de terre, car je n'irai plus avant si arons veus nos anemis. Et bien y a cause que je kes attende, car je sui sus le droit hiretage de madame ma mère, qui li fu donnés en mariage. Si le vorrai deffendre et calengier contre mon adversaire Phelippe de Vallois." Ses gens obeirent tout à se intention, et n'alèrent adonc plus avant.'

importance of personal charisma for the medieval king.²⁷⁰ The King also ordered that all should eat, drink and rest so that they would be better prepared when their enemy arrived. But Edward's cheerful encouragement is not the author's only focus. Froissart also mentions the tactical dispositions of Edward whom he says gave orders to his Constable and his marshals to divide the army into three bodies and to take up their positions.²⁷¹ Froissart also names the principal noblemen making up the three divisions.

Although the rear of Philippe's army had not yet caught up with the rest at Abbeville, the French is also described to have prepared for battle, and according to Froissart, Philippe received advise from his officers to send out scouts to reconnoitre the enemy's position, an advise he readily agreed to. A knight called Le Moine de Bazeilles - a man Froissart describes as both 'brave and chivalrous' - presented the outcome of this expedition to the King.²⁷² The English were waiting, 'prettily disposed', and ready for battle, said de Bazeilles. However, in de Bazeilles' opinion, Philippe should not advance, but halt his men. 'Before the rear can come up with you and you can put your divisions in some order, it will be getting late. Your men will

²⁷⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 274: 'Quant ces trois batailles furent ordonnées et que cescuns sires, barons, contes et chevaliers, sceurent quel cose il devoient faire et retraire, li dis rois d'Engleterre monta sus un petit palefroi blanc, un blanc baston en sa main, adestrés de ses deux marschaus; et puis ala tout le pas, de rench en rench, en amonnestant et priant les contes, les barons et les chevaliers, qu'il volsissent entendre et penser pour se honneur garder, et à deffendre son droit. Et leur disoient ces langages en riant, si doucement et de si lie cière, que, qui fust tous desconfortés, se se peüst il reconforter, en lui oant et regardant. Et quant il ot ensi viseté toutes ses batailles et ses gens, et amonnestés et priés de bien faire le besongne, il fu heure de haute tierce. Si se retraist en sa bataille, et ordonna que toutes ses gens mengassent à leur aise et buissent un cop. Ensi fu fait comme il l'ordonna. Et mengièrent et burent tout à loisir, et puis retoursèrent pos, barilz et pourveances sus leurs chars, et revinrent en leurs batailles, ensi que ordonné estoient par les mareschaus.'

²⁷¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 274

²⁷² SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 275. 'Finablement de le bouce dou roy issi li ordenance que li commanda au Monne de Basèle, que on tenoit à ce jour pour l'un des plus chevalereus et vaillans chevaliers du monde, et qui plus avoit travilliet de son corps, que il en desist sen entente.'

be tired and in no sort of shape and you will find that the enemy are fresh and rested and in no doubt of the way they plan to fight. In the morning you will be able to give more thought to your battle-order and make a closer study of the enemy's position to see which is the best line of attack,' Bazeilles is reported to have said.²⁷³

Le Moine de Bazeilles' advise demonstrates how Froissart thought that a 'brave' and 'chivalrous' knight should reply when asked to give his opinion. Contrary to what we may believe, de Bazeilles was not expected to urge his king to immediately engage in battle, or display his own eagerness to fight. Instead, he is portrayed by Froissart as a wise man giving a thorough outline of the tactics he believed were the best to adopt under the circumstances. This is in keeping with numerous other descriptions in the account where 'good' and 'chivalrous' men are reported to have given their opinion frankly to the king, often at the time when the king was angry and set on performing a violent deed. The perfect knight, as he is portrayed in Froissart's work, was clearly no coward set on pleasing his lord at all cost. On this occasion, the King is said to have fully approved of Le Moine de Bazeilles' advice and ordered his marshals to put it into execution. But unfortunately for the French, confusion in the army led to a completely different outcome. Regardless of the advice of de Bazeilles, says Froissart, the army continued to advance with disastrous consequences.

²⁷³ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 276. "Sire, ce dist le Monne de Basele, je parlerai, puis que il vous plaist par la correction de mes compaignons. Nous avons chevauchie si avant que nous avons veu et consideré le couvenant des ennemis. Saciés que il se sont mis et arresté en trois batailles bien et faiticement; et ne font nul semblant que il doivent fuir, mes vous attenderont, à ce qu'il moustrent. Si conseille de ma partie, salve tout dis le milleur conseil, que vous faites toutes vos gens ci arrester sus les camps et logier pour celle journée. Car ançois que li darrainnier puissent venir jusques à yaus, et que vos batailles soient ordonnées, il sera tart. Si seront vos gens lassé et travillié et sans arroy. Et vous trovères vos ennemis frès et nouviaux, et tous pourvus de savoir quel cose il doivent faire. Si porés de matin vos batailles ordonner plus meurement et mieulz, et par plus grant loisir aviser vos ennemis par quel lieu on les pora combatre car soiés tous seurs que il vous attenderont." "

Many great noblemen pressed hard to get in the first line, 'each wanted to outshine his companions', says Froissart who claims that 'pride and vanity' took charge of the events, a comment that shows that excessive lust for glory was not appreciated by the chronicler.²⁷⁴ And contrary to the cheerful leadership, calm and order he describes in the English camp, chaos soon took over amongst the French. 'They rode on . . . in no order or formation . . . and for what they did, the leaders were much to blame', continues Froissart who claims that nobody has ever been able to relate the whole truth of the matter.²⁷⁵ What he himself knew, he says, came mainly from the English 'who had a good understanding of their own battle-plan'²⁷⁶ and some of John of Hainault's men who on this occasion fought on the French side. The English, says Froissart, had got up with perfect discipline and formed their ranks, with the archers in a harrow formation and the men-at-arms behind.²⁷⁷ The Prince of Wales's division was in front. The second division, commanded by the Earls of Northampton and Arundel, was on the wing, ready to support the Prince if the need arose.

²⁷⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 276. 'Ensi et par grant orgueil fu demenée ceste cose, car cescuns voloit fourpasser son compaignon. Et ne peut estre creue ne oye li parole dou vaillant chevalier, dont il leur en meschei si grandement, com vos orés recorder assés briefment. Ne ossi li rois ne si mareschal ne peurent adonc estre mestre de leurs gens; car il y avoit si grant nombre de grans signeurs, que cescuns par envie voloit là moustrer sa poissance. Si chevaucièrent en cel estat, sans arroy et sans ordonance, si avant que il approcièrent les ennemis, et que il les veirent en leur presence.'

²⁷⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 276 - 7. 'Or fu moult grans blases pour les premiers, et mieulz leur vaulsist estre arrêté à l'ordonance dou vaillant chevalier, que ce qu'il fissent. Car sitretos qu'il veirent leurs ennemis, il reculèrent tout à un fait si desordeneement que cil qui derrière estoit s'en esbahirent, et cuidièrent que li premier se combatissent et qu'il fuissent jà desconfi. . . . Il n'est nulz homs, tant fust presens à celle journée ne eüst bon loisir d'aviser et ymaginer toute la besongne ensi que elle ala, qui en seuist ne peüst imaginer la verité, especialment de le partie des François, tant y eut povre arroy et ordonance en leurs conrois.'

²⁷⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 277. 'Et ce que j'en sçai, je le seuch le plus par les Englès qui imaginerent bien leur covenant et ossi par les gens monsigneur Jehan de Haynau qui fu toutdis dalés le roy de France.'

²⁷⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 277. 'Li Englès, qui ordonné estoient en trois batailles, et qui seoient jus à terre tout bellement, si tos qu'il veirent les François approcier, il se levèrent moult ordonneement, sans nul effroy, et se rengièrent en leurs batailles, ceste dou prince tout devant, mis leurs arciers à manière d'une herce, et les gens d'armes ou fons de leur bataille.'

The comment that the French lords arrived one after another in no kind of order shows that the chronicler expected a structure and a tactical plan, and that, in Froissart's opinion, the French lords failed their task by pushing forward. Froissart also shows that he was not particularly impressed by some of the French commanders when he relates how the Count of Alençon disregarded the pleas of the Genoese bowmen 'who were not ready to fight at that moment, for they had just marched over eighteen miles, in armour and carrying their crossbows'.²⁷⁸ 'What is the use of burdening ourselves with this rabble who give up just when they are needed!' Alençon is reported to have said.²⁷⁹ However, the Genoese, having been marshalled into proper order and made to advance, began to utter loud whoops to frighten the English. In contrast, the English waited in silence and did not stir, says Froissart, who then depicts the actions of the two sides.²⁸⁰ Between the English and the main body of the French there was a hedge of English knights, 'splendidly mounted and armed', who had been watching the French discomfiture and now cut off their retreat, he says. Seeing how miserably the footmen had performed, the French king called out in anger: 'Quick now, kill that entire rabble. They are only getting in our way.'²⁸¹ This was an order made 'par grant mautalent', states the

²⁷⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 278. 'Là avoit de ces dis Geneuois arbalestriers environ quinze mil, qui euissent ossi chier nient que commencer adonc le bataille, car il estoient durement lassé et travillié d'aler à piet plus de six lieues tout armé et de porter leurs arbalestres.'

²⁷⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 278. 'Ces parolles volèrent jusques au conte d'Alençon, qui en fu durement courociés, et dist: "On se doit bien cargier de tel ribaudaille qui fallent au plus grant besoing!"'

²⁸⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 278. 'Quant li Geneuois furent tout recueilliet et mis ensamble, et il deurent approcier leurs ennemis, il commencièrent à juper si très hault que ce fu merveilles; et le fisent pour esbahir les Englès, mès li Englès se tinrent tout quoi et ne fisent nul samblant . . . Et cil arcier d'Engleterre, quant il veirent ceste ordenance, passèrent un pas avant, et puis fisent voler ces saiettes de grant façon, qui entrèrent et descendirent si ouniement sus ces Geneuois que ce sambloit nège . . .'

²⁸¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 278. 'Entre yaus et les Englès avoit une grande haie de gens d'armes, montés et parés moult richement, qui regardoient le couvenant de Geneouis et comment il assambloient: si ques, quant il cuidièrent retourner, il ne peurent. Car li rois de France, par

chronicler, thus, showing that, in his opinion, Philippe made a bad judgement at this particular point.

'It is true that too few great feats of arms were performed that day, considering the vast number of fine soldiers and excellent knights who were with the King of France', says Froissart who also points out that the battle began late and the French had had a long and heavy day before they arrived. Yet, he says, they still went forward and preferred death to a dishonourable flight, a comment that shows that although Froissart believed that the noblemen should have heeded the order to halt, the right thing to do under the circumstances was to fight, not to fly.²⁸² However, not all preferred this honourable option, according to Froissart. Men like the Lord Charles of Bohemia, who had brought his men in good order to the battlefield, left when he saw that things were going badly for his side. 'I do not know which way he went', the author states laconically.²⁸³ In contrast, he praises Charles' father, the blind King of Bohemia, mentioned in the previous chapter. The King, says Froissart, came so close to the enemy that he was able to use his sword several times. In fact the King and his men advanced so far forward that they all remained on the field, not one escaping alive. They were found the next day lying around their leader, with their horses still fastened together, Froissart comments.²⁸⁴

grant mautalent, quant il vei leur povre arroy, et que il se desconfisoient, ensi commanda et dist: "Or tos, or tos tués toute ceste ribaudaille: il nous ensonnient et tiennent le voie sans raison."

²⁸² SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 279: 'Bien est verités que de si grant gent d'armes et de si noble chevalerie et tel fuison que li rois de France avoit là, il issirent trop peu de grans fais d'armes, car li bataille commença tart, et si estoient li François fort lassé et travillié, ensi qu'il venoient. Toutes fois, li vaillant homme et li bon chevalier, pour leur honneur, chevaucioient toutdis avant, et avoient plus chier à morir, que fuite villaine leur fust reprocie.'

²⁸³ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 279: 'Là estoit messires Charles de Behagne, qui s'appeloit et escrioit jà rois d'Alemagne et en poroit les armes, qui vint moult ordonneement jusques à le bataille. Mais quant il vei que la cause aloit mal pur yaus, il s'en parti: je ne sçai pas quel chemin il pris.'

²⁸⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 279: 'Ce ne fist mies li bons rois ses pères, car il ala si avant sus ses ennemis que il feri un cop d'espée, voire trois, voire quatre, et se combati moult vaillament. . .

The King of France, on his side, was in great distress when he saw his men being cut down one after the other by such a handful of men as the English were, continues the chronicler.²⁸⁵ However, his judgement of the French king is not overly harsh. The lateness of the hour harmed the French cause as much as anything, he says, for in the dark many of the men-at-arms lost their leaders and wandered about the field in disorder only to fall in with the English, who quickly overwhelmed and killed them.²⁸⁶ In fact, some French knights and squires succeeded in breaking through the Prince of Wales's archers and engaging the men-at-arms in hand-to-hand combat with swords, says Froissart, who states that there was much brave and skilful fighting at this point.

Froissart also relates how the young Prince of Wales was left to fend for himself after his father had been informed that the young prince was hard pressed and needed his help by a knight named Thomas of Norwich. 'Sir Thomas', the King answered, 'go back to him and to those who have sent you and tell them not to send for me again today, as long as my son is alive. Give them my command to let the boy win his spurs, for if God has so ordained it, I wish the day to be his and the honour to go to him and to those in charge I have placed him'.²⁸⁷ This reply did not dishearten the

Ne onques nulz ne s'en parti, et furent trouvé à l'endemain, sus le place, autour dou roy leur signeur, et leurs chevaus tout alloiiés ensamble.'

²⁸⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 280: 'Vous devez sçavoir que li rois de France avoit grant angousse au coer, qaunt il veoit ses gens ensi desconfire et fondre l'un sus l'autre, d'une puignie de gens que li Englés estoient.'

²⁸⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 281: 'Ceste bataille, ce samedi, entre la Broie et Creci, fu moult felenesse et très horrible. Et y avinrent plusieurs grant fais d'armes qui ne vinrent mies tout à cognissance; car, quant la bataille commença, il estoit jà moult tart: ce greva plus les François c'autre cose. Car plusieurs gens d'armes, chevaliers et escuiers, sus le nuit, perdoient leur signeurs et leur mestres. Si waucroient par les camps, et s'ematoient souvent à petite ordenance entre les Englès où tantost il estoient envay et occis.'

²⁸⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 281. 'Si dist li chevaliers, quant il fu venus au roy: "Monsigneur, li contes de Warvich, li contes de Kenfort et messires Renaulz de Gobehehem, qui son dalés le Prince vostre fil, ont grandement à faire, et les combatent li François aigrement. Pour quoi il vous prient que vous et vostre bataille les venés conforter et aidier à oster de ce peril; car, se cilz

commanders of his son's division. Instead, says Froissart, they privately regretted having sent Thomas. They fought better than ever and must have performed great feats of arms, for they remained in possession of the ground with honour, says the author who clearly perceived Edward's reply as highly commendable.²⁸⁸ Regardless of his age, the young Prince Edward had to prove himself and his valiant effort at Crécy secured him an increase in his symbolic capital. Although the Prince played a very limited role in the strategic and tactical decision-making at Crécy, Edward III should later attribute the victory to his son who gained much in reputation through this, says David Green.²⁸⁹

At midnight the battle was over and the English had withstood several waves of French attackers without losing ground; eleven princes lay dead on the field, eighty bannerets and twelve hundred ordinary knights, according to the author. The French loss was horrible, he continues, and for a long time after France was much weakened in honour, force and council.²⁹⁰ But the outcome could have been even worse. Had the English mounted a pursuit, as they did later at Poitiers, they would

effors monteplie longement et s'efforce ensi, il se doubtent que vostre filz n'ait à faire." Lors respondi li rois et demanda au chevalier, qui s'appelloit messires Thumas de Nordvich: "Messires Thumas, mes filz est il ne mors ne atierés, ou si bleciés qu'il ne se puist aidier?" – Cilz respondi: "Nenil, monsieur, se Dieu plaist, mais il est en dur parti d'armes: si aroit bien mestier de vostre ayde." – "Messire Thumas, dist le rois, or retournés devers lui et devers chiaus qui ci vous envoient; et leur dittes de par moy qu'il ne m'envoient meshui requerre pour aventure qui leur aviegne, tant que mes filz soit en vie. Et dittes leur que je leur mande que il laissent à l'enfant gaegnier ses esporons; car je voeul, se Dieux l'a ordonné, que la journée soit sienne, et que li honneur l'en demeure et à chiaus en qui carge ja l'ai bailliet.'

²⁸⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 281. 'Sus ces parolles, retourna li chevaliers arriere, et recorda à ses mestres tout ce que vous avés oy; laquelle response les encoraga grandement, et se reprisent en yaus meismes de ce que là avoient envoiet. Si furent milleur chevalier que devant, et y fisent plusieurs apertises darmes, ensi que il apparu, car la place leur demora à leur honneur.'

²⁸⁹ Green, David: *The Battle of Poitiers. 1356*. Stroud 2002. p. 79.

²⁹⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 284. 'Vous devés savoir que la desconfiture et la perte pour les François fu moult grande et moult horrible, et que trop y demorèrent sus les camps de nobles et vaillains hommes, dus, contes, barons et chevaliers, par lesquelz li royaumes de France fu moult depuis afoiblis d'onneur, de poissance et de conseil.'

have killed many more, including the King himself, states the author, who thereby shows that he was comparing the two battles when he wrote his account.²⁹¹ However, Froissart was not only judging the excellence, or lack of thereof, of noblemen when he was summing up the outcome of the battle of Crécy. Interestingly, the author argues that although many fine feats of arms were performed, the English archers were of primary importance, 'because it was them that contributed most to the discomfiture of the Genoese crossbowmen at the beginning of the battle'. This is a comment that shows that Froissart by no means only perceived the actions of noblemen to be importance.²⁹²

Froissart's account of the great defeat suffered by the French chivalry provides vital information about the chronicler's values and perspective, and there can be no doubt that Froissart focuses partially on individual prowess and bravery in his account. One example is the bravery shown by the blind king of Bohemia, another when he relates the bravery of the young Prince of Wales and his men. The courageous attacks of the French knights who were able to break through the English archers and engage the English in hand-to-hand combat are clearly admired,²⁹³ as are the actions of the French nobles who preferred death to a 'dishonourable flight'. And although he does not outright condemn the actions of Lord Charles of Bohemia who left the battlefield when he saw that things were going badly for his side, Froissart clearly indicates which of the two earned his regard when he juxtaposes the behaviour of the son with that of his father. The emphasis he puts on Edward's

²⁹¹ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 284. 'Et saciés que, si les Englès eussent caciet ensi qu'il fissent à Poitiers, encores en fuissent trop plus demoret, et li rois de France meismes'

²⁹² SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 284: 'Si vous di que ce jour li arcier d' Engleterre portèrent grant confort à leur partie, car par leur tret li plusieurs dient que la besongne se fist, comment que il y eut bien aucuns vallains chevaliers de leur lés qui vaillamment se combatirent de le main . . . mais il doit bien sentir et cognoistre que li arcier y fissent un grant fait, car par leur tret de commencement furent desconfi li Geneuois qui estoient bien quinze mil, qui leur fu uns grans avantages.'

²⁹³ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 282.

cheerful encouragement of his men, and his refusal to come to his young son's aid so that the Prince and his men could win honour for themselves also show that Froissart admired individual prowess, courage and charismatic leadership.

Still, Froissart's description provides us with a far less one-dimensional picture of medieval war than we might have expected. First, we should note the structure of his text and the fact that the outline of the deliberations between men and the preparations for the battle occupies more space in his account than the description of the battle itself. This is an indication of the relative importance of these matters and Froissart's interest in them. Secondly, throughout his account of the preliminaries Froissart shows a strong desire to 'explain' the outcome of the battle, and finds it necessary to relate the tactical moves and dispositions of the two armies. As we have seen, he praises men like the Moine de Bazeilles' who gave Philippe the wise advice to halt and put his men to fight when rested and the well-ordered English archers whose actions he believed were the most decisive factor in winning the battle. This implies that Froissart was not content with celebrating the actions of noblemen, nor did he look for the causes of defeat only in the lack of individual prowess or bravery. Instead, he blames the outcome on the French noblemen's excessive need to 'show off', their lack of obedience, bad communication and tired troops, an evaluation that indicates that, in Froissart's opinion, to press forward to engage the English at whatever cost was not a commendable action.

Contrary to what we may have expected, Froissart seems genuinely interested in relating the successful tactics and plans of the English, and the causes for why the battle went so horribly wrong for the French. This perspective is further developed in the next part of his account where the author deals with the siege of Calais.

3.2. The Siege of Calais

After Edward's victory at Crécy, he continued towards Calais, a prosperous seaport to which he had no claim save as King of France. Why Edward set out for Calais has been a subject of debate for modern historians.²⁹⁴ While some, like the French historian Edouard Perroy, have seen Edward's attempts to take Calais as a way to easily secure himself a port where he could re-embark,²⁹⁵ Clifford Rogers see the siege of Calais as yet another provocation in order to bring Philippe to a decisive battle. 'The idea that Edward, desiring to take ship again for England, would abandon the port of le Crotoy (which he had already taken, and where he had long since ordered the fleet to arrive), then underestimate the time needed to capture a city by ten or twenty times, but stay there anyway for a year, just to capture a port, is easily dismissed,' he says.²⁹⁶

Roger's view is supported by Froissart's account where Godfrey of Harcourt is described to have pointed out that Calais was the final destination of the *chevauchée* already at an early stage.²⁹⁷ When Edward arrived before Calais, the chronicler says that it was with the firm intention to take it 'without regard for the time and effort it might cost him', thus, showing that in his opinion Edward was set on taking Calais

²⁹⁴ See R. C. Smail: "Art of War" in *Medieval England*, ed. A.L. Poole. Oxford 1958. p. 155. De Vries, Kelly R.: 'Hunger, Flemish Participation and the Flight of Philip VI: Contemporary accounts of the Siege of Calais 1346 - 7.' in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*. 1991 and Burne, Alfred H.: *The Crecy War*. London 1990 (1955).

²⁹⁵ Perroy, Eduard: *The Hundred Years War*. New York 1965. p 119.

²⁹⁶ Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. p. 274 - 75.

²⁹⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. ' . . . messires Godefrois de Harcourt . . . dist: "Chiers sires, . . . Vous avez encores à faire un moult grant voiage, ançois que vous soiiés devant Calais, où vous tirés à venir. . . ."'

not gaining general access to a sea-port.²⁹⁸ Edward had proper houses built and put up in ordered streets 'as though they were to be lived in for ten to twelve years', says the author.²⁹⁹ The English also established a market, haberdashers and butcher's shops, well supplied with goods that were brought over daily from England and Flanders. In addition, the English continued the terrorizing of the surrounding country and was thus able to replenish their stocks of food.³⁰⁰ According to Froissart, Edward decided that an assault on the town would be in vain. Instead he decided to 'starve the place out . . . unless King Philippe of France came to fight him again'.³⁰¹

When the military commander of the castle, Sir Jean de Vienne, saw that the English were preparing for a long siege, he sent the poor people out of the city in order to save the city's provisions and seventeen hundred of them came out straight into the English army, says Froissart. But instead of killing them or sending them back, a solution that would have made most sense strategically and put more stress on the city's resources, Edward, according to the author, let them pass. He also gave them a hearty meal and two pence each, 'a merciful act that was highly praised', says Froissart who in this way manages to paint a picture of a courteous king showing clemency when it was appropriate.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 288. 'Car tèle estoit se intention qu'il ne s'en partiroit, ne par ivier ne par esté, si l'aroit conquis, quel temps ne quel painne qu'il y deuist mettre ne prendre.'

²⁹⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 288. 'Et fist batir et ordonner entre le ville et le rivièrè . . . maisons, et carpenter de gros mairiens, et couvrir les dittes maisons, qui estoit assises et ordonnées par rues bien et faiticement, . . . , ensi que donc que il deuist là demorer dix ans ou douze.'

³⁰⁰ Other sources also show that he borrowed huge sums of money in order to establish his siege. See *Indentures of war*, Bundle 70. no. 13. Edward borrowed money from several, for instance Gautier de Shirton and Gilbert de Windlinbourg.

³⁰¹ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 288. 'Et point ne faisoit li dis rois ses gens assallir le ditte ville de Calais, car bien savoit que il perderoit se painne et qu'il s'i traveilleroit en vain. Si espargnoit ses gens et se artillerie, et disoit que il les affameroit, com lonch terme que il y deuist mettre, se li rois Phelippes de recief ne le veoit combatre et lever le siège.'

³⁰² SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 288: 'Si en vuidièrent et partirent sus un merkedi au matin, que hommes, que femmes, que enfans, plus de dix sept cens, et passèrent parmi l'ost dou roy

Froissart's description of Edward's largesse is similar to the one we find in Jean le Bel's account where the author explicitly says that he has included this passage due to the 'grande gentillesse' shown by Edward.³⁰³ It is also the description given by the modern historian Michael Prestwich in his book *The Three Edwards*.³⁰⁴ However, the description differs widely from what we find in Henry Knighton's contemporary account in which he claims that Edward did not let the poor people pass but left them to die of hunger and frost between the city and the English army.³⁰⁵

It is of course difficult to establish who is telling the truth, although one may suspect that the Augustinian canon's account of the events is the most truthful. Froissart, who based this portion of his narrative on le Bel, may not have known that the events could have unfolded somewhat differently at Calais. Le Bel could have been better informed but may have chosen to change his story at this particular point so as not to detract from Edward's honour by relating the events as they actually unfolded. One may also suspect that a description of how Edward failed to act with

d'Engleterre. Et leur fu demandé pourquoi il vuidoient; il respondirent que il n'avoient de quoi vivre. Adonc leur fist li rois grace que de passer et aler parmi son host sauvement; et leur fist tous et toutes donner à disner bien et largement, et apriès disner à çascun deux estrelins: laquèle grace et aumosne on recommenda à moult belle, ce fu bien raisons.'

³⁰³ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre LXXIII. 'Quant le noble roy [Edward III] vit ainsy ces povres gens mises dehors de leur ville, ilz les fist venir tous devant luy en sa grande sale et leur fist à tous donner à boyre et à menger planteusement, et quant ilz eurent bien mengié et but, il leur donna congié d'aler hors de son ost, et à chascun fist donner III vielz estrelins pour l'amour de Dieu et les fit conduire bien loing de son ost. On doibt bien cecy recorder pour une grande gentillesse.'

³⁰⁴ Prestwich, Michael: *The Three Edwards. War and State in England 1272- 1377*. London 1980. pp. 178 - 79.

³⁰⁵ Knighton, Henry: *Knighton's Chronicle 1337 - 1396*, ed. G.H. Martin. Oxford 1995. Henry Knighton was an English chronicler and an Austin (Augustinian) canon at the Abbey of St Mary of the Meadows in Leicester. His work is partly a retrospective history and partly a chronicle of contemporary events. He died in 1396 and was a contemporary of Froissart. It should be noted that there is no apparent reason why Knighton should record a 'disfavourable' account of the events.

clemency towards the poor, expelled people of Calais would not only detract from Edward's honour, but also deal a blow to the narrator's project of displaying chivalrous deeds as examples for other knights to follow. As we have already seen, descriptions of merciful acts towards poor people are celebrated in other sequences of the *Chroniques*, for instance in the portrayal of Gaston Fébus.

Calais continued to be steadily reduced by famine, but held out. Philippe, however, was unable to raise an army to come to its rescue until July 1347, a whole year after the beginning of the siege. However when Philippe finally came, however, Edward did not jump at the chance of battle according to Froissart (and le Bel). Instead he reflected that the siege had cost him so dear in money, lives and personal hardship that he would not abandon it. He therefore decided to cut off the two roads by which the French army could approach him, states the author.³⁰⁶ When this was reported to Philippe, the French decided to send envoys to Edward with a chivalrous request for battle. Pointing out that he would dearly like to raise the siege, but that Edward and his men were impossible to approach, Philippe suggested that the two parties should take council and agree to arrange a fight on a fair field.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 308: 'Or vous dirai que li rois d'Engleterre fist et avoit jà fait, quant il sceut que li rois de France venoit à si grant host pour lui combatre et pour dessieger la ville de Calais, qui tant li avoit cousté d'avoir, de gens et de painne de son corps; et si avoit bien que il avoit la ditte ville si menée et si astrainte que elle ne se pooit longement tenir: se li venroit à grant contraire, se il l'en couvenoit ensi partir. Si avisa et imagina li dis rois que li François ne pooient venir à lui ne approcier son host ne le ville de Calais, fors que par l'un de deux pas, ou par les dunes sus le rivage de le mer, ou par dessus là où il avoit grant fuison de fossés, de croleis et de marés.'

³⁰⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 309. 'Là s'avança messires Ustasses de Ribeumont à parler pour tous; et disent: "Sire, le rois de France nous envoie par devers vous et vous segnefie que il est ci venus et arrestés sus le mont de Sangates pour vous combatre; mais il ne poet veoir ne trouver voie comment il puist venir jusc'à vous: si en a il grant desir, pour dessegier sa bonne ville de Calais. Si a il fait aviser et regarder par ses gens comment il poront venir jusc'à vous, mes c'est cose impossible. Si veroit volontiers que vous volsissiés mettre de vostre conseil ensamble, et il metteroit dou sien, et par l'avis de chiaus, aviser place là où on se peuist combatre, et de ce sommes nous cargié de vous dire et requerre.'

This is a request we may have expected a truly chivalrous king to accept. Edward, however, declined Philippe's offer after a brief consultation with his advisers, says Froissart, an event widely recorded in letters and diaries of the age. Froissart, however, seemingly saw nothing wrong in this decision. Instead, he shows how Edward issued a statement where the King claimed that he had every right to be where he was and had been for nearly a year. 'I am not disposed to do very much to suit his [Philippe's] plans and convenience or let slip the thing I have so strongly desired and bought so dearly', Edward is reported to have said urging Philippe and his men to look for a better way to reach him.³⁰⁸ Edward's refusal, as portrayed by Froissart, did not detract from the King's honour. In this respect it is interesting to note that when relating the same story Robert d'Avesbury claimed that Edward accepted Philippe's request for battle.³⁰⁹ This indicates that not everybody believed Edward's refusal to be in keeping with the chivalrous ethos of the day.

In reality the battle never took place, a fact somewhat in opposition to Rogers' view that Edward was actively seeking a decisive battle. Frustrated and angry Philippe finally gave up and retreated to Tournai while the citizens of Calais surrendered.³¹⁰ And again the English king did not immediately react in the manner we would

³⁰⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 309. 'Li rois d' Engleterre, qui bien entendi ceste parolle, fu tantost consilliés et avisés de respondre, et respondi et dit: "Signeur, j'ay bien entendu tout ce que vous me requérés de par mon adversaire, qui tient mon droit hiretage à tort, don't il me poise. Se li dirés de par mi, se il vous plaist, que je suis ci endroit, et y ay demoret, depuis que je y vinc, priès d'un an. Tout ce a il bien sceu; et y fust bien venus plus tost, se il volsist. Mais il m'a ci laissiet demorer si longuement que jou ay grossement despendu dou mien. Et y pense avoir tant fait que assés temprement je serai sires de le ville et dou chastiel de Calais. Si ne sui mies consilliés dou tout faire à sa devise et se aise, ne d'eslongier ce que je pense à avoir conquis et que j'ay tant desiret et comparet. Se li disés, se ilz ne ses gens ne poeent par là passer, si voisent autour pour querir la voie'.

³⁰⁹ See Robert of Avesbury: *De gestis mirabilibus regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson. London, Rolls Series, 1889. Froissart based his description on Jean le Bel's account and the refusal is related in both *Chronique Normande du XIVe siècle*, ed. A. and E. Molinier. Paris 1882 and *La Chronographia*.

³¹⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 310 - 11.

expect of this 'most chivalrous king'. After Calais had been taken Froissart describes how Edward was reluctant to spare the remaining citizens and noblemen of the town.³¹¹ When Sir Jean de Vienne, the town's commander, asked permission to leave, Edward failed to grant his request and Vienne was forced to plead his case to Sir Walter Manny. Pointing out that the French defenders had served the King of France in accordance with their honour and duty, in the same manner as Manny would have done had the roles been reversed, de Vienne was able to persuade Manny to plead their case to Edward.³¹²

However, in spite of the fact that de Vienne's request was clearly a chivalrous one, Edward was not readily moved on this occasion and, according to Froissart, Sir Walter Manny had to 'reason with the King' by pointing out that his refusal could have detrimental effects. Portrayed as speaking fairly frankly, Manny claimed that Edward was setting a bad example by refusing to let the noble defenders of Calais go. 'Suppose one day you sent us to defend one of your fortresses, we should go less cheerfully if you have these people put to death, for then they would do the same to us if they had a chance', Manny is reported to have said. 'This argument did much to

³¹¹ See SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 262. Edward's anger and initial wish to put all the inhabitants to the sword is also seen in the description of the sack of Caen, but Geoffroy de Harcourt 'wisely' showed how the King's resources would be better spent otherwise.

³¹² SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 311. 'Adonc respondi messires Jehans de Viane et dist: "Ce seroit trop dure cose pour nous, se nous consentions ce que vous dittes. Nous sommes un petit de chevaliers et d'escuiers qui loyaument à nostre pooir avons servi nostre signeur, ensi comme vous feriés le vostre, en samblant cas; et en avons enduré mainte painne et tamainte mesaise. Mais ançois en soufferions nous tèle mesaise que onques gens n'endurèrent ne souffrirent la pabelle, que nous consentissions que li plus petis garçons ou varlés de le ville eüst aultre mal que li plus grans de nous. Mais nous vous priions que vous voelliés aler par vostre humilité devers le roy d'Engleterre, et li priiés que il ait pitié de nous: si ferés courtoisie, car nous esperons en lui tant de gentillèce que il ara merci de nous" - "Par ma foy, respondi messires Gautiers, messire Jehan, je le ferai volentiers. . . ."

soften the King's heart', says Froissart,' especially when most of his barons supported it . . .'³¹³

This sequence, copied by Froissart from Jean le Bel,³¹⁴ shows clearly that both authors believed in lenient treatment of prisoners of war, and especially of the noble prisoners. But the account also shows that a valiant knight was not afraid to stand up to his king. Loyalty did not preclude frankness. One may suspect that it occasionally took a lot of persuasion to make a king, hungry for victory or blinded by rage, to change his mind, and Froissart shows how Edward had to be persuaded to spare the lives of men on several occasions. However, his intention was probably not to portray Edward acting in opposition to the chivalrous ethos, but to show that acting in accordance with chivalrous virtues could be hard and challenging, especially if one's own losses had been great or if one had received unfair treatment. Even though Edward had to be persuaded to spare the inhabitants of Calais, he gave in when one of his trusted councillors pointed out the correct procedure and his initial reluctance did not detract from his honour. To be guided to right action by your 'wise' knights clearly did not threaten the royal honour.

Edward did not, however, agree to spare all the men of Calais. Six of the most prominent burghers would have to give themselves up, and after long deliberations six wealthy merchants volunteered, an act clearly admired by Froissart who describes the despair of the citizens of Calais in greater detail than le Bel.³¹⁵ He also

³¹³ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 311. 'Lors de retrest avant li gentilz sires de Mauni et parla moult sagement au roy, et dist pour aidier chiaus de Calais: "Monsigneur, vous poriés bien avoir tort, car vous nous donnés mauvais exemple. Se vous nous volliés envoier en aucunes de vos fortèreces, nous n'irions mies si volontiers, se vous faites ces gens mettre à mort, ensi que vous dittes, car ensi feroit on de nous en samblant cas." Cilz exemples amolia grandement le corage dou roy d'Engleterre, car li plus des barons qui là estoient l'aidièrent à soustentir.'

³¹⁴ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre LXXX. pp. 161 - 63.

³¹⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 312. 'Quant il furent tout venu et assamblé en le place, hommes et femmes, messires Jehans de Viane leur remoustra moult doucement les paroles toutes tèles que

names the courageous citizens and portrays how Sir Jean de Vienne praised their courage and honour. Stripped to their shirts and breeches, the citizens placed halters round their necks and carried with them the keys to the town and the citadel. And again, Sir Walter Manny is described to have appealed, asking the King to curb his anger. Manny also pointed out that Edward had a reputation for royal clemency and urged the King not to perform an act that might tarnish it: 'If you do not spare these men, the world will say that it was a cruel deed and that it was too harsh of you to put to death these honourable citizens who have voluntarily thrown themselves on your mercy to save the others'.³¹⁶

Manny is the voice of chivalry, Edward the punishing lord. In Froissart's text punishment was the natural consequence to opposition, and a nobleman or king, had the right to determine the fate of lesser men. Everybody recognised Edward's right to chastise the inhabitants of Calais, still the chivalrous code and the quest for symbolic capital suggested a less harsh option. In spite of this, it was not until Queen Philippa, Froissart's patroness, pleaded for the six burghers that Edward agreed to let them go. Philippa, in the author's opinion, was crucial in restraining the implacable justice of the King. As the Virgin Mary interceded with God on behalf of mankind, so it was thought right and proper for a queen to intercede with the king on behalf of the commoners. According to Froissart, the townsmen received new

chi avant sont recitées, et leur dist bien que aultrement ne pooit estre, et euissent sur ce avis et brief response. Quant il oïrent ce raport, il commencièrent tout à crier et à plorer telement et si amerement qu'il ne fust nulz si durs coers ou monde, se il les veist et oïst yaus demener, qui n'en euist pitié, et n'eurent en l'eure pooir de respondre ne de parler.'

³¹⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 312. 'Adonc parla messires Gautiers de Mauni et dist: Ha! gentilz sires, voelliés rafrener vostre corage. Vous avés le nom et le renommée de souverainne gentillèce et noblèce. Or ne voelliés donc faire cose par quoi elle soit noient amenrie, ne que on puist parler sur vous en nulle manière villainne. Se vous n'aves pitié de ces gens, toutes aultres gens diront que ce sera grant cruaultès, se vous faites morir ces honnestes bourgeois, qui de leur proper volonté sont mis en vostre merci pour les aultres sauver.'

clothes and an ample dinner in Philippa's chambers before they were escorted into safety.

The French knights of the town, 'who were gentlemen' and according to Froissart 'could be trusted on their word', were sent off and the rest of the population were sent out of Calais to seek their fortune elsewhere.³¹⁷ It was a great pity to see these great and noble burghers and their beautiful children leave the city of their ancestors, says Froissart, who also says that the burghers received no compensation from the King of France, for whose sake they had lost everything.³¹⁸ Froissart also states that Edward wanted to populate Calais with 'pure-blooded English',³¹⁹ a rather puzzling comment given the fact that the retinue of the English king was made up of men of various nationalities; English, Normans and Gascons.³²⁰ It should also be noted that the comment is not found in le Bel's account of the same events.³²¹

According to Jules Viard and Eugene Déprez, editors of the SHF edition of Jean le Bel's chronicle, it is not true that Philippe failed to compensate the burghers of

³¹⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 313. ' . . .li rois d' Engleterre . . . leur dist: " . . . Et prèdes tous les chevaliers qui laiens sont et les metés en prison, ou faites leur jurer et fiancier prison; ils sont gentil homme: je les recrerai bien sus leur fois." '

³¹⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 314. 'Or me samble que c'est grans annuis de piteusement penser et ossi considerer que cil grant bourgeois et ces nobles bourgeoises et leurs biaux enfans, qui d'estoch et d'estracion avoient demoret, et leur ancisseur, en le ville de Calais, devindrent: des quelz il y avoit grant fuison au jour quelle fu conquise. Ce fu grans pités, quant il leur couvint guerpier leurs biaux hostelz et leurs avoirs, car riens n'en portèrent; et si n' en eurent oncques restorier ne recouvrier dou roy de France, pour qui il avoit tour perdu.'

³¹⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 313. ' . . .li rois d' Engleterre . . . leur dist: " . . .Et tous aultres saudoïiers, qui sont là venu pour gaignier leur argent, faites les partir simplement, et tout le demorant de le ville, hommes et femmes et enfans, car je voeil la ville repeupler de purs Englès." '

³²⁰ In fact, compared to contemporary texts, like for instance *Le Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, Froissart is not very nationalistic. See *Chronique des quatres premiers Valois*, ed. S. Luce. Paris 1862. In this later work, the enemy was predominantly the English.

³²¹ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre LXXX. pp. 167 - 69.

Calais, but conferred various offices and rights upon them.³²² In fact, says Geoffroy Brereton, many of the burghers of Calais were either not dispossessed or re-admitted into Calais after a few weeks, a scenario which seems more in accordance with the traditional procedure in these matters.³²³ Eustache de Saint Pierre, one of the six honourable burghers willing to give their life for the rest of the inhabitants, is confirmed to have been given a post of special responsibility and to have kept his possessions in Calais, says Brereton.

However, both le Bel and Froissart make a point out Philippe's alleged lack of restitution to the citizens of Calais. The reason for this is clear in le Bel's case - throughout his account his tone is hostile and condemning towards Philippe and favourable towards 'le noble roy Edouard'. However, the reason why Froissart chose to include the allegations, if they were not true, is far less apparent. Although seemingly far more positive towards Philippe, it could be that he too found Philippe's failure to come to the rescue of Calais to detract from the symbolic capital of the French king.

Although his luck in battle was not greater, Philippe's son, John, should gain a better reputation for chivalry than his father, as we shall see in Froissart's description of the battle of Poitiers.

³²² See Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre LXXX. pp. 169. Note 1. and Molinier, M: *Cabinet historique*. 1878, pp. 254-289. 'Documents relatifs aux Calaisiens expulsés par Edouard III'.

³²³ *The Chronicles of Jean Froissart*. ed. and trans. Brereton, Geoffrey. London 1968. p. 110.

3.3. The defeat at Poitiers

As stated by Froissart in his evaluation of the battle of Crécy, Valois monarchy was gravely weakened in 'honour, force and council' by the events in 1346 - 7.³²⁴ However, it should take another eight years before the English, this time led by the young prince Edward, should meet the French king, John II, in battle again.³²⁵ 'Like the Crécy campaign of 1346, the Poitiers *chevauchée* has often been interpreted as "nothing but the razzia of a ravenous pirate", a simple booty-collecting expedition rather than the execution of a strategic plan aimed at obtaining a decisive political result,' says Clifford Rogers pointing to the treatment of the campaign by various modern historians.³²⁶ This, he says, was not the case. Still, the opinion that the battle of Poitiers was a battle, which difficult circumstances constrained the prince to fight, is more credible than the corresponding case for 1346, he says, pointing to his previous analysis of the Crécy campaign as a provocation in order to bring the Valois to decisive battle.

In Froissart's account it is by no means clear that the Prince was actively seeking to provoke John of France into battle. On the contrary, Froissart's description supports the view that the Prince was trying to escape back to his lands in Aquitaine after a long pillaging raid. However, the Prince's campaign in Languedoc in 1355 is certainly described as being intended to provoke Count Jean d' Armagnac into going against him. According to Froissart, several towns and cities were sacked and

³²⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome III. § 284. 'Vous devés savoir que la desconfiture et la perte pour les François fu moult grande et moult horrible . . . par lesquelz li royaumes de France fu moult depuis afoiblis d'onneur, de poissance et de conseil.'

³²⁵ One of the most obvious reasons why this took so long was that Black Death struck England in 1348.

³²⁶ Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360.* Woodbridge 2000. pp. 348 - 49.

pillaged, and men, women and children killed.³²⁷ However, Armagnac did not come out to meet the Prince, and the ravaging campaign continued undisturbed.³²⁸ According to the author, the Prince and his men moved forward in good military order in the same manner as his father had done before him ten years earlier.³²⁹ Moving through the prosperous region of Berry, they took towns and castles, prisoners and supplies in quantity. And what they did not take, they burnt, the author states, again without condemnation.

Hearing of the ravaging of his realm, the King of France, John, who at this point was laying siege to Breteuil,³³⁰ had a great wish to go against the English, says Froissart, and quickly left the siege. At Chartres, he gathered a new and larger army, and started reinforcing the garrisons of various fortresses.³³¹ However, when news of John's decisive moves reached the Prince, he was not discouraged, but took council with his men and decided to continue the raids in Touraine and Poitou 'before

³²⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 357 - 59. In his book on Charles V, Roland Delachanal stated that this ravaging raid was void of strategic consideration, with no other goal than ruining the country through which the English army passed. According to Rogers, this was not the case. The campaign was intended as political theater, albeit theater of a particularly brutal and bloody kind. By his actions, Edward the Black Prince was making an announcement to all Frenchmen, that, even if they lived far from the normal conflict zones, John could not protect them, says Rogers. See Delachanal, Roland: *Histoire de Charles V*. Paris 1909 p. 126. and Rogers Clifford J.: *War cruel and Sharp. English strategy under Edward III, 1327 - 1360*. Woodbridge 2000. p. 313.

³²⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 357. 'Et se trouvoient bien de communauté quarante mil hommes, qui estoient en grant volonté de issir hors et de combatre les Engles; mes li contes d' Ermignach leur deffendoit et leur aloit au devant. Et disoit que, si il issoient hors, il s' iroient tout perdre.'

³²⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome IV. § 370: 'Si chevaucioient li dis princes et cil signeur et leurs gens ordonneement, et passèrent la rivière de Garonne à Bregerach, et puis oultre, en venant en Roerge, le rivière de Durdonne. Si entrèrent en ce pays de Roerge, et commencèrent à guerrier fortement, à rançonner villes et chastiaus ou ardoir, à prendre gens, à trouver pourveances grandes et grosses, car li pays estoit lors pourveus, et demoroit tout brisiet et essillet derrière yaus.'

³³⁰ Breteuil was a stronghold of Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, who had rival claims to the French throne.

³³¹ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 371.

heading back to Bordeaux from where they came', a comment which can be seen to imply that the Prince was in fact trying to escape the French army.³³² When news of the Prince's flight reached the King of France, the King pressed on, 'fearing that the Prince should escape him before he could bring him to battle', says the author.³³³ The Prince's army on their side knew nothing of the whereabouts of the French, but was, at one point able to take some French prisoners who informed them that the French were ahead of them rather than behind. Realising that they could not leave the district without fighting, the Prince halted in the fields and gave orders that no one should ride ahead of the Marshal's banner, an order that was strictly observed, according to the chronicler.³³⁴ The English then continued towards Poitiers and a reconnoitring force was sent out to observe the French.

John of France was pleased to hear that his enemies were behind him and not ahead, says the author, and started organising his troops and preparing for battle the next morning.³³⁵ The French army was divided into three divisions, each numbering around 16,000 men, and four knights were sent out to reconnoitre the English force.³³⁶ One of these, Sir Eustace de Ribemont, is said to have reported back that they estimated the English numbers at two thousand men-at-arms, four thousand

³³² SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 372. 'Si eut li dis princes conseil qu'il se metteroit au retour et passeroit parmi Touraine et Poiti, et revendroit, tout en guerriant, ardant et essillant le pays, à Bourdiaus dont il s'estoit partis.'

³³³ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 376. 'Nouvelles vinrent au roy de France, que li princes de Galles se hastoit durement pour retourner ens ou pays dont il estoit partis. Si se doubta li dis rois que il ne li escapast, ce que il n'eüst nullement volentiers veu, tant le desiroit il à combatre.'

³³⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 377. 'Quant li princes de Galles et ses consaulz eurent entendu que li rois Jehans et ses batailles estoient devant yaus . . . et que nullement il ne se pooient partir dou pays, sans estre combatu, si se recuillièrent et rassamblèrent ce samedi sus les camps. Et fu adonc commandé de par le prince, que nuls, sus la teste, ne courust ne chevauçast sans commandement devant la banière des mareschaus.'

³³⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 377. 'Quant li rois entendi que si ennemi, que tant desiroit à trouver, estoient derrière de lui et non devant, si en fu durement et grandement resjoïs; et retourna tout à un fais et fist retourner toutes manières de gens boen avant sus les camps et yaus là logier.'

³³⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 378.

archers and fifteen hundred light-armed men. When inquiring how the English troops were disposed, John, according to Froissart, was well informed of the strong position of his opponent: 'Although we are convinced that they have only one division, it is extremely skilfully placed', Sir Eustace is reported to have stated. When asked by the King to give his advice as to the proceedings Sir Eustache is said to have replied that the best course of action would be 'with everyone on foot, except for three hundred of the most vigorous and experienced knights in your army, mounted on first rate horses, to break through those archers and scatter them. And then your formations of men-at-arms would follow quickly and engage their men-at-arms hand-to-hand.'³³⁷

As we may see above Froissart has chosen to relate the tactics of the French army in the dialogue between John and Sir Eustache. These preliminary events occupy a substantial place in the narrative and are vital to our understanding of what follows. 'When the King's forces were mustered and armed, with each commander among his men under his own banner, and each fully aware of the part he had to play, orders were given for everyone to dismount, except those who had been chosen by the Marshals to break through the archers,' says the author. These orders were obeyed to the letter, for everyone accepted them as right and proper . . .'³³⁸

³³⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 379. 'Adonc respondi messires Eustasses de Ribeumont, si com je fui enfourmés, pour tous, . . . et dist ensi: "Sire, nous avons veu et considerés vos ennemis: si poeent estre par estimation doi mil hommes d'armes, quatre mil arciers et quinze cens brigans." - "Et comment gisent il?" dist li rois. - "Sire, respondi, messires Eustasses, il sont en très fort lieu, et ne poons veoir ne imaginer qu'il n'aient fait que une bataille; mès trop bellement et trop sagement l'ont il ordonné. . . ." Adonc parla li rois et dist: "Messires Eustasse, et comment y conseilieriés vous à aler et combatre?" Dont respondi li chevaliers et dist: "Sire, tout à piet, excepté trois cens armeures de fier des vostres, tout de plus apers, hardis, durs, fors et entreprendans de vostre host, bien armés et bien montés sus fleurs de coursiers, pour desrompre et ouvrir ces arciers, et puis vos batailles et gens d'armes vistement sievir tout à piet et venir à ces gens d'arms, main à main, et yaus combatre de grant volenté. C'est tous li consaulz que de mon avis je y puis donner ne imaginer; et qui mieulz y scet, se le die."'

³³⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. 'Quant les batailles dou roy de France furent toutes ordonnées et appareillies, et cescuns sires desous se banière et entre ses gens, et savoit ossi cescuns quel cose il devoit faire, on fist commendement, de par le roy, que cescuns alast à piet, excepté cil qui

With their battle-plan in order, the French were ready to advance. However, at the very moment the French troops were about start moving, the Cardinal of Perigord came riding up, asking to be heard, says Froissart.³³⁹ The Cardinal wanted to make an attempt to negotiate between the two parties, a request the King of France agreed to.³⁴⁰ Against the advice of Sir Eustace de Ribemont, who as we have seen, had made the initial battle-plan, the Cardinal managed to get the French king to agree to a one-day truce. The Cardinal 'begged and exhorted the King so fervently that he eventually gave in', says Froissart.³⁴¹ However, on the English side the truce was very welcome, he says, not because they feared the battle, but 'because they were continually improving their dispositions and their battle-plan'.³⁴² What the English feared the most, says Froissart (and le Bel)³⁴³ was to be hemmed in so closely that they could not send out foragers, and compared to the French, the English were getting low on food. It is fair to say, says the author, that the English feared battle

ordonné estoient avoecques les mareschaus pour ouvrir et fendre les arciers, et que tout cil qui lance avoient le retaillassent au volume de cinq piés: par quoi on s'en peüst le mieus aidier, et que tout ossi ostassent leurs esporons. Ceste ordonnance fu tenue et fu à tout homme belle et bonne.'

³³⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. 'Ensi que il devoient approcier et estoient par samblant en grant volenté de requerre leurs ennemis, evous le cardinal the Pieregorch qui vient ferant battant devers le roy, . . . , et encline le roy moult bas en cause d'umilité et le prie à mains jointes, pour si hault homme que Diex est, que il voelle astenir et afrener un petit tant qu'il ait parlé à lui.'

³⁴⁰ Pope Inncoent VI had sent the cardinal of Perigord and the cardinal of Urgel to France to try to make peace between the King of France and his enemies, says Froissart, and especially the King of Navarre whom the King of France had imprisoned. See SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 375.

³⁴¹ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. 'Mès finalement li dis cardinaulz qui s'en ensonnioit, en espesse de bien, pria tant et preeça le roy de France que li rois s'i assenti et donna et acorda le respit à surer le dimence tout le jour et l'endemain jusques soleil levant.'

³⁴² SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. 'Et le raporta ensi li dis cardinaulz moult vistement au prince et à ses gens, qui n'en furent mies courouciet, pour tant que toutdis s'efforcoient il d' avis et d'ordenance.'

³⁴³ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Tome II. Chapitre XCIV. p. 236.

less than being pinned down where they were and starved out like a beleaguered garrison.³⁴⁴

Although the Prince offered to restore to the King of France everything he had taken on his campaign, both towns and castles, to hand over all his prisoners and to swear not to take up arms against France for the next seven years, the French would not give in to the proposal, according to Froissart.³⁴⁵ Knowing that the English could neither retreat nor escape, John wanted a hundred English knights, including the Prince and his closest followers, to surrender unconditionally, a suggestion which the Prince and his council would never have accepted, says Froissart.³⁴⁶ Although a pitched battle against a superior force was clearly feared, complete surrender would have been too dishonourable and dangerous, at least in this case. When the negotiations failed both parties were ready to fight, and Froissart relates how the English made some minor alterations to their battle-order and tactics, before the Prince gave two of his knights, James Audley and Eustace d'Aubrecicourt permission to make the first attack on the enemy:³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 382: 'Che dimence se tinrent li François tout le jour sus les camps, et au soir il se retraisent en leurs logeis et se aisièrent de ce qu'il eurent. Il avoient bien de quoi, vivres et pourveances assés et largement; et li Englès en avoient grant defaute. C'estoit la cause qui plus les esbahissoit; car il ne savoient où ne quel part aler fourer, si fort leur estoient li pas clos; ne il ne se pooient partir de là sans le dangier des François. Au voir dire, il ne ressongnoient point tant le bataille que il faisoient ce que on ne les tenist en tel estat, ensi que pour assegiés et affamés.'

³⁴⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. 'Et me furent dit jadis des gens le dit cardinal de Pieregorch, qui là furent present et qui bien en cuidoient sçavoir aucune cose, que li princes offroit à rendre au roy de France tout ce qui conquis avoit en ce voiage, villes et chastiaus, et quitter tout prisonniers que il ne ses gens avoient pris, et jurer à lui non armer contre le royaume de France sept ans tous entiers.' As we may see, the Prince and his men must have believed that they could not win over the French superior force.

³⁴⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 380. ' . . . lequel trettiet li princes de Galles ne ses consaulz n'eussent jmais acordet.'

³⁴⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 384.

Messire James d'Audelée, en le garde de ses quatre escuiers et l'espée en le main, si com ci dessus est dit, estoit ou premier fronch de ceste bataille, . . . , et là faisoit merveillez d'armes. Et s'en vint par grant vaillance combatre desous le banière de monsieur d' Audrehem, marescal de France, un moult hardi et vaillant chevalier; et se combatirent grant temps ensamble. . . Là eut grant froisseis et grant bouteis, et maint homme reversé par terre. Là escrioient li aucun chevalier et escuier de France, qui par tropiaus se combatoient: "Monjoie! Saint Denis!" et li Englès: "Saint Jorge! Giane!" Là estoit entre yaus grandement proèce remoustrée; car il n'i avoit si petit qui ne vausist un bon homme d'armes. . . . Et y avinrent trop plus de biaux fais d'armes sans comparaison que il ne fesissent à Creci, comment que tant de grans chiés de pays n'i furent mies mort, que il furent à Creci. Bien est verités que plusieurs bon chevalier et escuier, quoique leur signeur se partesissent, ne se voloient mies partir, mès euissent plus chier à morir que fuite fust reprocie . . . Et se acquittèrent si loyaument envers leur signeur tout cil qui demorèrent à Poitiers, mort ou pris, que encore en sont li hoir à honnourer, et li vaillant homme qui là se combatirent, à recommander.³⁴⁸

In this way began the battle of Poitiers, where the French against all odds were so badly beaten and their king taken. As we may see in the very abbreviated account above, Froissart enhances the prodigies of valour that were performed by what he perceives as 'worthy men-at-arms'. Although some of the great lords left the battle,

³⁴⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 385 - 89

their men stayed behind, preferring death to dishonourable flight, he says. According to Froissart there were incomparably more fine feats of arms at Poitiers than at Crécy although not so many great lords were killed, a comment that shows that the author compared the two battles when he evaluated the battle. 'All who fell at Poitiers or were taken prisoner did their duty so loyally to their king that their heirs are still honoured for it and the gallant men who fought there are held in perpetual esteem', states the chronicler.³⁴⁹ One of the men however, deserved particular recommendation, in Froissart's opinion: John of France, Tucoo-Chala's idealist, who remained on the field from beginning to end, 'like the brave knight and stout fighter he was'.³⁵⁰ Being determined never to retreat, he stood in the forefront of his men, says Froissart.

The passage quoted above captures the essence of what we generally perceive today as chivalrous warfare and revokes numerous other descriptions from the Middle Ages, like *Bértrand de Born's* appraisal of the beauty of war³⁵¹ and the author of *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal's* description of his hero's honourable behaviour

³⁴⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 388. 'Et si acquittèrent si loyaument envers leur signeur tout cil qui demorèrent à Poitiers, mort ou oris, que encore en sont li hoir à honorer, et li vaillant homme qui là se combatirent, à recommander.'

³⁵⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 388. ' . . . on ne poet pas dire ne presumer que li rois Jehans de France s'effreast onques pour cose que il oist ne veist; mès demora et fu toutdis bons chevaliers et bien combatants, et ne moustra pas samblant de fuir ne de reculer . . . '

³⁵¹ de Born, *Bértrand*.: *The poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born* ed. W.D. Paden, T. Sankovitch and P.H. Stablein. Berkeley 1986. ' . . . I love to see, amidst the meadows, tents and pavilions spread; and it gives me great joy to see, drawn up on the field, knights and horses in battles array; and it delights me when the scouts scatter people and herds in their path; and I love to see them followed by a great body of men-at-arms; and my heart is filled with gladness when I see strong castles besieged, and the stockades broken and overwhelmed, and the warriors on the bank, girt about by fosses, with a line of strong stakes, interlaced . . . Maces, swords, helms of different hues, shields that will be riven and shattered as soon as the fight begins; and many vassals struck down together; and the horses of the dead and the wounded roving at random. And when battled is joined, let all men of good lineage think of naught but the breaking of head and arms; for it is better to die than to be vanquished and live. I tell you, I find no such savour in food, or in wine or in sleep.'

and bold fighting at the battle of Drincourt.³⁵² Still, it is perhaps not the descriptions of the personal prowess, but the lack of bias in the account and the descriptions of noblemen honouring their opponents that bear witness to Froissart's great reverence for chivalrous values and his understanding of the principle that real honour was obtained through overcoming a 'worthy' enemy. This is of course especially seen in Froissart's description of the dinner scene after the battle, discussed in the previous chapter.

However, as we have also seen, displays of prowess only make up parts of Froissart's account. Froissart's description of the battle-site and the placement, disposition and plans of the two parties reveals that war, in Froissart's opinion, was so much more than the actual fighting between noblemen. Although he relates how men like James Audley and Arnould d'Audrehem were able to perform glorious deeds of arms, he also relates long and detailed discussions about battle-dispositions and plans. Froissart's desire to analyse the causes of the defeat is also seen in his final evaluation of the battle where he claims that in spite of the French defeat, the battle of Poitiers was better fought than the battle of Crécy, and not solely because there were more fine feats of arms being performed. 'Both armies had greater opportunities to observe and weigh up the enemy, for the battle of Crécy began without proper preparation in the late afternoon, while Poitiers began in the early morning, and in good enough order, if only luck had been with the French', states the author.³⁵³ In addition, the description of how John abandoned Sir Eustace de

³⁵² HGM Verses 886 – 1106. ' . . . The Marshal, whose lance was broken, took the sword in his hand an inspired all his companions to bravery . . . The heralds and minstrels started proclaiming his valiant behaviour . . . The Marshal did not stop to fight until the Flemish sergeants had put an iron hook through his shoulder. They were thirty to get him off his horse, but the horse died. The burghers who saw the Marshal's hardiness, regained their spirit . . . One said that the Marshal had kept all at bay'. (My translation)

³⁵³ SHF Livre I. Tome V. § 388. 'Mais au voir dire, la bataille de Poitiers fu trop mieulz combatue que ceste de Creci, et eurent toutes manières de gens d'armes, mieulz loisir de aviser et considerer leurs ennemis, que il n'eussent à Creci; car la ditte bataille de Creci commença au

Ribemont's initial battle-plan under the pressure of the Cardinal of Perigord functions in an explanatory way. Had the Cardinal not interfered and thus given the English less time to organise, de Ribemont's plan might have worked and the French could have been victorious.

There can be no doubt that Froissart perceived both Edward the Black Prince and John the Good of France as men with great symbolic capital who lived their lives in accordance with the chivalrous ideal. However, in Froissart's account these great men were not merely courteous, generous and valiant, able to inspire their men to fight for their cause. He also portrays them as men who planned their battles carefully and cunningly with the help of their foremost magnates. In the case of the Prince, Froissart also shows how this 'Flower of Chivalry' tried to escape from the French army, having ravaged and pillaged the French countryside. Although the Prince's actions may have been misunderstood by Froissart and indeed was intended to provoke John into battle, the account still indicates that in Froissart's view there was no discrepancy between the chivalrous ideal and the actions of the Prince. 'If the strategy that led to victory involved destroying the reputation and revenue of one's enemy by burning and destroying the land, property and persons of non-combatants then this was, by definition, chivalrous,' states David Green in the introduction to his book about the battle.³⁵⁴

Similarly to Froissart's description of Gaston Fébus, the ideals and values the author propagates in the descriptions of 'chivalrous' warfare are far more complex than we may have expected, and he also shows a clear willingness to 'explain' how and why the events unfolded as they did. This impression is further enhanced if we look at

vespre tout tart, sans arroi et sans ordenance, et ceste de Poitiers matin, à heure de prime, et assés par bon couvenant, se eur y eüst eu pour les François.'

³⁵⁴ Green, David: *The battle of Poitiers 1356*. Stroud 2002. p. 14.

Froissart's account of the later development in the war between the English and the French.

In 1369 the peace between England and France was broken, and the French, led by Bertrand du Guesclin attacked and captured fortresses in Aquitaine. At one point they also laid siege to Limoges, and according to Froissart, du Guesclin was able to negotiate so skilfully with the Black Prince's commander, the Bishop of Limoges that the town went over to the French side.³⁵⁵ This enraged the Black Prince who by this point was suffering from the illness, which was to cause his death. Although unable to ride a horse, he was still able to order the attack on Limoges. However, having thoroughly examined the fortifications and the number of armed men in the town, says Froissart, the Prince recognised that they would not be able to take it by assault. Consequently, a different tactic was put into operation, he says, and a team of miners were ordered to dig under the city wall.³⁵⁶ Eventually, the mines were set on fire bringing a large part of the walls surrounding the city down.

The massacre that followed was clearly lamented by Froissart:

Là eut grant pitié; car hommes, femmes et enfans se jettoient en genoulz devant le prince et crioient 'Merci, gentilz sires, merci!' Mais il estoit si enflammés d'aïr que point n'i entendoit, ne nuls ne nulle n'estoit oïs, mès tout mis à l'espée, quanques on trouvoit et encontroit, cil et celles qui point coupable n'i

³⁵⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome VII § 663. 'Tantost il [du Guesclin] commença à aherdre les trettiés qui estoient entamé entre l'evesque de Limoges et chiaus de le cité et le duc de Berri, et les poursuivi si songneusement et si sagement qu'il se fisent et se tournerèrent françois.'

³⁵⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 663. 'Au dire voire, quant li princes et si mareschal eurent bien imaginé et considéré le circuité et le force de Limoges, et il sceurent le nombre de gentilz hommes qui dedens estoient, si disent bien que par assaut il ne l'aroient jamais. Lors jeuèrent il d'un aultre avis, et menoit par usage toutdis li princes avoouch lui en ses chavaucies grant fuisson de huïrons c'on dist mineurs. Chil furent tantost en oevre mis et commnecièrent à miner efforcement par grant ordenance.'

estoyent; ne je ne sçai comment il n'avoient pité des povres gens qui n'estoyent mies tailliet de faire nulle trahison; mais cil le comparoyent et comparèrent plus que li grant mestre qui l'avoient fait. Il n'est si durs coers, se il fust adonc à Limoges et il li souvenist de Dieu, qui ne plorast tenrement dou grant meschief qui y estoit, car plus de trois mil personnes, hommes, femmes et enfans, y furent deviiet et decolet celle journée. Dieu en ait les ames, car ils furent bien martir!³⁵⁷

Many scholars have seen the massacre of Limoges as one of the foremost examples of the 'gap' that had opened up between chivalrous ideals and practices, and it has also been argued that Froissart in spite of his lamentations did not fully fathom the extent of the tragedy, because he also relates how the Black Prince stopped to watch the valiant fighting between the English and some of the French noblemen.³⁵⁸ The French knights finally surrendered and were granted mercy while the massacre of the townspeople continued unchecked. However, although the juxtaposition of the scene where the inhabitants of Limoges pled for mercy and the scene where the Prince admires the skilful fighting of his men may seem a little tasteless for a modern reader, I believe that the criticism of Froissart's description of the events at Limoges is too harsh.

Numerous scenes related by Froissart in his chronicles support the view that he believed clemency to be an essential part of the qualities a good nobleman should possess, and, as we may see above, he clearly expresses the view that he could not understand how the Prince could fail to take pity on the inhabitants of Limoges. The

³⁵⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 666.

³⁵⁸ Kilgour, Raymond L.: *The Decline of Chivalry as shown in the French literature of the Late Middle Ages*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1937. pp. 66 - 68.

actions of the Prince clearly detracted from his symbolic capital, although the author seems unable to outright condemn him. However, it should be noted that the picture we get of the Prince in the last part of Book I is more negative than we may have expected. When relating the relations between the Prince and one of his vassals, the Lord of Labreth, Froissart states that the prince was 'very haughty . . . and always expected his vassals to agree with him', a portrayal which seems far removed from the humble youngster serving at the French king's table³⁵⁹ According to Richard Vernier, also other sources bespeaks the deterioration of the Prince's vaunted chivalry and fading status in the eyes of contemporaries.³⁶⁰

In France, says Froissart, the news of the destruction of the city of Limoges was received with anger and dismay, and it was decided that what was needed was a military commander 'un chief et gouverneur nommé constable'. As already related, the man appointed to the office was Bertrand du Guesclin, a man who should adopt a completely different and more pragmatic attitude when it came to waging war on the English.³⁶¹ Having learned from their mistakes, says Froissart, the French were not so easily provoked when Edward III, after the Treaty of Brétigny, sent his other son, John of Gaunt, to Picardy where he and his men started terrorizing the countryside. 'The English plainly showed that they desired nothing more than to engage the French in battle', says Froissart, but the King of France, doubtful of the result, and set on avoiding more disastrous defeats, would not permit his men to

³⁵⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome VI § 559. 'Veci auques le première fondation de la hayne qui fu entre le prince de Galles et le seigneur de Labreth. Et en fu adonce li sires de Labreth en grant peril, car le prince estoit durement garns et haus de courage et crueulz en son air, et voloit, fust à tort, fust à droit, que tout seigneur asquelz il pooit commander tenissent de lui.'

³⁶⁰ Vernier, Richard: *The Flower of Chivalry. Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years War*. Woodbridge 2003. pp. 145 - 50. Vernier rightly argues that the author of the Anonimale chronicle cannot be suspected of pro-French sympathies.

³⁶¹ SHF Livre I. Tome VI § 668.

fight and decided instead to have the English followed.³⁶² Although the forces did eventually engage in minor fights outside Ribemont and Ouchy, both to the disadvantage of the English, the French did not attack.³⁶³

This passive strategy, says Froissart, was criticised by several French noblemen who felt that the nobility was failing its duty by not bringing the English to open battle.³⁶⁴ However, the Constable of France, Bertrand du Guesclin, did not share this view. In a discussion with the King and his council, du Guesclin stated that he only wanted to fight the English if the French were in a position of advantage - 'as they know how to do so well and have done so often . . .'.³⁶⁵ Du Guesclin's view was, according to Froissart, shared by another great noble, Olivier de Clisson,³⁶⁶ and the advice of the

³⁶² SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 740.

³⁶³ SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 744.

³⁶⁴ SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 743. ' . . . car plusieurs baron et chevalier dou royaume de France et consaulz des bonnes villes murmuroient l'un à l'autre et disoient en public que c'estoit grans inconveniens et grans vitupères pour les nobles dou royaume de France, où tant baron, chevalier et escuier dont la poissance est si renommée, quant il laissoient ensi passer les Engles à leur aise, et point n'estoient combatu, et que de ce blasme il estoient vituperé par tout le monde.'

³⁶⁵ SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 744. 'Si parla par l'amendement d'yaus tous . . . et dist au roy: "Sire, tout chil qui parollent des Engles combatre, ne regardent mies le peril où il en poeent venir, non que je die nullement que il ne soient combatu, mais je voeil que ce soit à nostre avantage, ensi que bien le scevent prendre, quant il leur touche; et l'ont plusieurs fois eu à Creci, à Poitiers, en Gascongne, en Bretagne, en Bourgongne, en France, en Pikardie, et en Normendie, les queles victoires ont trop grandement admagié vostre royaume et les nobles qui y sont; et les ont tant enorgueillis que il ne prisent ne amirent nulle nation fors la peur, par les grans raençons que il en ont pris et eus, de quoi il sont enrichi et enhardi.'

³⁶⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 744. 'Li sires de Clisson . . . porta grant couleur au connestable, en disant que il consilloit bien le roy et moult loyaument, et tantost i mist raison pour quoi: " . . . De mon petit avis, je ne conseille pas que on les combatte, se il ne sont pris à meschief, ensi qu'on doit prendre son ennemi. Je regarde que les besongnes dou royaume de France sont maintenant en grant estat, et que ce que que li Engles y ont tenu par soutieument guerrier, il l'ont perdu.'" ' Olivier de Clisson came from a great Breton family serving both the French and the English crowns at different times. After his father's execution for treason in Paris in 1343, the young Olivier was taken by his mother to England and brought up at the court of Edward III, who treated the young knight generously. He fought on the English side for a considerable time, going over to the French side openly in 1370.

two prominent men was heeded. 'I will not risk my men and my kingdom for a bit of flat country', the King of France is reported to have said, an opinion supported by the Duke of Anjou: 'We shall still be waging war against the English, just as before. But when they expect to find us in one part of the country we shall be in another, and we shall take from them when it best suits us the few pieces of territory they still hold'.³⁶⁷ The French stuck to their plan and did not engage in fights with Gaunt's force. Desperate to bring the French to battle, the young English duke sent a formal challenge to the French, but was refused, a reply that brings back to memory the outfall when Philippe sent his challenge to Edward III at Calais.³⁶⁸

Froissart labels du Guesclin as 'le plus vaillant, mieus tailliet et sage de ce faire et le plus ewireus et fortuné des ses besongnes, qui en ce temps s'armast pour le couronne de France'³⁶⁹ - an evaluation I believe sums up the more complex chivalrous ideal propagated by Froissart in his descriptions of war. Not only was du Guesclin the most 'worthy', 'gallant' leader fighting at that time in the service of France, he was also the wisest and the most successful. Although clearly paying reverence to 'prowess', Froissart's account of campaigns, sieges and battles, shows that men increased their symbolic capital by behaving in ways that led to victory and success. This, I believe, again indicates that Froissart operated with a more complex, even more pragmatic, concept of chivalry than we may have expected.

³⁶⁷ SHF Livre I. Tome 8. § 744. ' "Par ma foy, dist li rois, sires de Clicon, je n'en pense ja à issir, ne à mettre ma chevalerie et mon royaume en peril d' estre perdu pour un pan de plat pays. . . . Et vous, qu'en dittes, mon frere d'Ango?" - "Par ma foy, respondi li dus d'Ango, qui vous consilleroit autrement, il ne le feroit pas loyaument. Nous guerrierons tous les jours les Englès, ensi que nous avons commenchié; quant i nous cuideront trouver en l'une partie de royaume, nous serons à l'autre, et leur torrons tous jours à nostre avantage ce petit que il y tiennent." '

³⁶⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome VIII. § 748.

³⁶⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 668

In the next chapter, I will attempt to analyse Froissart's account of the reign of Richard II, a reign that ended in crisis and a coup d'état where his cousin, Henry of Derby, son of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, was installed on the English Crown. Why, according to Froissart, was Richard overthrown? Was it because he failed to act in accordance with the rules of chivalry? Or do we again find that the values and ideals propagated are more complex?

4. Chivalry and kingship

Geoffrey Brereton, in the Introduction to his widely read abbreviated translation of Froissart's chronicles, states that Froissart, in one sense, was the first of the great war-reporters,³⁷⁰ and it is true that the author put great emphasis on campaigns and battles, especially in the first part of his account. However, he also recorded events of a more social and political nature, including popular uprisings, political dealings and the downfall Richard II of England, an account which occupies large parts of Book IV of his chronicles as well as parts of Book II and III.

Richard II, born in Bordeaux in 1367, was the son of Edward the Black Prince and Joan the Fair of Kent, and was but ten years old when he succeeded his grandfather, Edward III. During his minority a council under the leadership of John of Gaunt, his uncle, ruled England. Central in the government of the realm was also his uncle Thomas of Gloucester and to a lesser degree, his other uncle, Edmund of Langley, duke of York.³⁷¹ Today, Gaunt's rule is mainly judged as a failure exacerbating the economic crises brought on by the Black Death and the war with France. The resulting Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was the first crisis of Richard's reign.³⁷² Later Richard tried to distance himself from the rule of his uncles and began to build up a group of unpopular favourites from less influential noble families. Amongst them was Robert de Vere,³⁷³ and he was also close to his tutor Sir Simon Burley. However,

³⁷⁰ *Jean Froissart*. ed. and trans. Brereton, Geoffrey. London 1968. p. 9.

³⁷¹ For a discussion of the relationship between Richard II and his uncles, see Chris Given Wilson's article 'Richard II and the Higher Nobility' in *Richard II. The Art of Kingship*. Oxford 1999. pp. 107 – 28.

³⁷² For a comprehensive overview of the causes for the Peasant's revolt in England in 1381, see for instance Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 56 – 82.

³⁷³ Robert de Vere, the ninth earl of Oxford (1362 - 92), was the only son of Thomas de Vere, eighth earl of Oxford, and Maud (d. 1413), daughter of Sir Ralph de Ufford (d. 1346), and a descendant of King Henry III. He became the ninth earl of Oxford upon his father's death in

Richard's reliance on these councillors led to widespread dissatisfaction and an organised opposition, led by his uncle Thomas of Gloucester, the Earl of Arundel and the Earl of Warwick, began to surface.

Gaunt, the leading man in English politics, kept the peace, but his departure for Spain in July 1386 left Richard exposed.³⁷⁴ Richard's request for money to fight France prompted Parliament to demand the dismissal of his favourites, something Richard refused. This provoked Parliament to impeach his chancellor, and create a commission to oversee the King's activities. When Richard declared these measures treasonable, Parliament and his opponents retaliated in 1388 by outlawing his closest counsellors and friends, and several were executed.³⁷⁵ Richard appeared defeated and submitted to the demands of the five 'Lords Appellant' who in addition to Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick consisted of Thomas Mowbray, the Earl Marshal and Henry of Derby, Gaunt's son.³⁷⁶

1371 and married Philippa (d. 1412), daughter of his guardian Ingelram de Couci, Earl of Bedford, a son-in-law of Edward III. Already hereditary great chamberlain of England, Oxford was made a member of the Privy Council and a Knight of the Garter; castles and lands were bestowed upon him and he was constantly in the company of Richard II. In the 1380's he was given extensive rights in Ireland and was created Marquess of Dublin for life. He was regarded with jealousy by the nobles and also made powerful enemies when he divorced his wife and re-married. In the parliament of 1388 he was found guilty of treason and was condemned to death, but as he had fled abroad the sentence was never carried out.

³⁷⁴ In 1371, following the seizure of the Castilian throne by Henry of Trastamara, John of Gaunt had married Constance, daughter of the deposed Pedro, and laid claim to the throne in her right. When Henry of Trastamara died in 1379, Gaunt perceived the opportunity to reclaim the throne and left to engage in campaigns in Spain. See Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 96 – 97.

³⁷⁵ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 193 - 97. In addition to Sir Simon Burley, Sir John Beauchamp, Sir John Salisbury and Sir James Berners were all impeached on sixteen counts of treason and were executed.

³⁷⁶ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. p. 189. According to Saul there is evidence that suggest that Richard already at this point was deprived of his crown. According to the chronicle of Whalley Abbey, Gloucester and his nephew Derby could not agree on which one of them was to take Richard's place and in the end he was restored to his title.

Gaunt's return from Spain in late 1389 stabilized matters, and for eight years Richard worked in apparent harmony with Gaunt and his uncles.³⁷⁷ Yet he gradually formed a second, stronger royalist party. In 1397 he arrested and tried three of the former Appellants. The Earl of Arundel was convicted of treason and executed, Warwick was banished and Gloucester imprisoned and probably murdered. For a short time, Richard was able to strengthen his position. He was granted revenues for life and the powers of Parliament were delegated to a committee.³⁷⁸ He also built up a power base in Cheshire and wedded the seven-year-old Isabella of Valois, daughter of Charles VI of France, presumably to end a further struggle with France. The marriage was widely criticised by contemporaries.

In September 1398 a quarrel between the two former Appellants, Henry of Derby and Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal and now also Duke of Norfolk, gave the King an opportunity to banish them both – the Earl Marshal for life, Derby for ten years. Richard, according to his biographer Nigel Saul, was at this point at the height of his powers.³⁷⁹ This renewed confidence may have prompted him to confiscate the vast Lancastrian estates and extend Henry's banishment to life after John of Gaunt's death in 1399. However, these actions did not strengthen his authority, and dissatisfaction and unrest spread in the country. Set on getting back his inheritance, Derby, who had been residing in France during his banishment, invaded England where he rallied both noble and popular support. Richard who at this point had undertaken a campaign to Ireland, desperately tried to raise support to go against his cousin, but found himself deserted by several key-members of the nobility. He surrendered without meeting Henry in battle. In September 1399 he abdicated and Derby

³⁷⁷ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 205 – 69.

³⁷⁸ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 366 – 404.

³⁷⁹ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 402 - 04.

ascended the throne as King Henry IV. In October, Richard was imprisoned in Pontefract Castle, where he died four months later.³⁸⁰

‘Richard’s deposition was arguably the most portentous event in the political history of late medieval England’, says Chris Given-Wilson in the introduction to his selection of contemporary narratives describing the events of 1397 – 1400.³⁸¹ The deposition was vigorously debated amongst contemporary authors whose texts bear witness to a great variety of viewpoints.³⁸² At one end of the spectrum we find the *Record and Process*,³⁸³ the official account of Richard’s deposition condemning Richard’s rule and justifying Henry’s actions, and Thomas Walsingham’s chronicles.³⁸⁴ At the other end of the spectrum, we find two French texts: *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengeleterre*,³⁸⁵ which condemns the usurpation and urges the French nobility to take action, and the *Histoire du Roy d’Angleterre Richard*³⁸⁶ written in verse. More independent, but still mainly favourable towards Henry’s cause are a selection of Cistercian chronicles³⁸⁷ and the chronicle of Adam of Usk,³⁸⁸ a text that according to Given-Wilson ‘reads like the work of a man for whom

³⁸⁰ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 425 – 26. Whether a direct order to dispose of Richard was given is uncertain, according to Saul.

³⁸¹ Given-Wilson, Chris : *Chronicles of the Revolution*, Manchester 1993. p. 1.

³⁸² For an overview of the sources for the reign of Richard II, see Martin, G.H.: ‘Narrative sources for the reign of Richard II’ in *The Age of Richard II*, ed. James. L. Gillespie. Stroud 1997.

³⁸³ *Rotuli Patliamentorum*, ed. J. Strachey et al, vol.iii. 1783. See this text in Given-Wilson, Chris : *Chronicles of the Revolution*, Manchester 1993. pp. 168 – 89.

³⁸⁴ Walsingham, T.: *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley. 2 vols. London 1863-64.

³⁸⁵ *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengeleterre*, ed. B. Williams. 1846.

³⁸⁶ *Histoire du Roy d’Angleterre* ed. J. A. Buchon. (Collection des Chroniques Nationales Françaises, vol. XXIII, 1826).

³⁸⁷ *Kirkstall Abbey Chronicles*, ed. J. Taylor. 1952 and the *Dieulacres Chronicle* in Given-Wilson, Chris : *Chronicles of the Revolution*, Manchester 1993. pp. 94 – 98.

³⁸⁸ *Chronicon Adae de Usk*, ed. E. M. Thompson. 1904.

the clash of loyalties had become too astute.³⁸⁹ We also find descriptions of some of the earlier events of Richard's reign in the *Westminster Chronicle*³⁹⁰ and the *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*.³⁹¹

Traditionally, Froissart has been seen as being less negative towards Richard than many of the writers above who wrote to placate their Lancastrian patrons and an audience set on justifying the overthrowing of an anointed king.³⁹² However, although not writing a 'Lancastrian tract',³⁹³ Froissart was in fact quite critical of Richard and his policies, as we will see in the following.³⁹⁴ His own opinion and attitudes towards the events and people he describes are by no means easy to establish, even at times contradictory. Noblemen, who are portrayed as acting fairly valiantly and courteously in one part of his account, are described as presumptuous and foolish in others. This of course makes it difficult to make absolute judgements when it comes to the ideals and values propagated at this stage in his account. However, Michel Zink points out that the last chapters of Froissart's chronicles where he relates the downfall of Richard II seems to be constructed as a lesson.³⁹⁵

³⁸⁹ Given-Wilson, Chris: *Chronicles of the Revolution*. Manchester 1993. p. 6.

³⁹⁰ *Westminster Chronicle 1381 – 1394*, ed. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey. 1982.

³⁹¹ *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*, ed. J. R. Lumby, 1895. For a modern translation see *Knighton's Chronicle 1337 – 1396*, ed. G.H. Martin. Oxford 1995.

³⁹² See for instance Duls, Louisa D.: *Richard II in the earlier chronicles*. Den Haag 1975 pp. 235 – 38 and Sherbourne, James: 'Charles VI and Richard II' in Palmer, J.: *Froissart. Historian*. Woodbridge 1981. p. 54.

³⁹³ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*. Oxford 1990. p. 307. 'Froissart is only too well aware of the uncomfortable status of the usurper king,' says Peter Ainsworth.

³⁹⁴ This is also a point made by George B. Stow in 'Richard II in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*' in *Journal of Medieval History* 11. 1985. pp. 333 - 45.

³⁹⁵ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. p. 89.

Although not always easy to grasp, this lesson, I believe, provides insight to Froissart's perceptions of kingship and chivalry and the relationship between them.

4.1. '*Comment les fortunes de ce monde sont merveilleses et tournent deversament*'³⁹⁶ - the downfall of Richard II.

Froissart deals with the life and deeds of several kings or great magnates in his chronicles. Some descriptions are highly favourable, like the descriptions of Edward III, and his son the Black Prince, while the descriptions of Edward II and Richard II, respectively at the beginning and the end of his chronicles, are portrayals of kings who failed their task and were deposed. In the introduction to his chronicle, Jean le Bel, states that it was commonly believed amongst the English that in between two brave and warlike kings there was always one less gifted in body and mind.³⁹⁷ Froissart on his side, states that while Edward III's grandfather, Edward I, was a brave, wise and resourceful ruler, enterprising in war, his son Edward II was of a different calibre, governing his kingdom badly and foolishly on the advice of his evil counsellor Sir Hugh Despenser.³⁹⁸ In Froissart's account, Richard II made many of the same mistakes as his great-grandfather, and Michel Zink in his book on Froissart argues that there is a distinct symmetry between the beginning and the end of his chronicles.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ *Chroniques Livre III et IV*. Livre IV. §82. 'Or considerez, seigneurs, rois, ducs, contes, prelatz et toutes gens de lignage et de poissance, comment les fortunes de ce monde sont merveilleses et tournent diversament!'

³⁹⁷ Jean le Bel: *Chronique*. SHF. Chapitre I. '... l'opinion des Anglès est communement telle, et l'a on souvent veu avenir en Angleterre puis le roy Artus, que entre deux vaillains roys d'Angleterre a tousjours eu ung mains souffisant de sens et de proesse.'

³⁹⁸ SHF Livre I. Tome II. § 1.

³⁹⁹ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 105 - 6. In his book on Richard II, Nigel Saul shows that there are in fact many analogies between the two kings. See Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 430 - 34. However, Saul argues that unlike Edward II Richard was not the victim of manipulation by over-mighty councillors and courtiers. 'It was Richard himself who had

In Froissart's *Chroniques* we first meet Richard as a boy-king in Book II when the author relates the Peasants' Revolt in England.⁴⁰⁰ The revolt had started in Brentwood, Essex in May 1381 where a mob had risen against tax collectors. These later joined with a group of men from Kent and thousands of people sacked the city of London, 'passing like a tornado, levelling and gutting the houses of lawyers and judges'.⁴⁰¹ They also forced a knight by the name of Sir John Newton to become their captain, and were able to persuade several knights and nobles to go with them, according to Froissart.

Arriving at Blackheath, the villains decided to send John Newton to ask the King for a meeting, a request to which Richard agreed. However, when he arrived in his barge where the mob was waiting, they all began to shout. This scared the noblemen following Richard and they advised the King not to land, says Froissart.⁴⁰² However, Richard was not frightened, but is described by the chronicler as being bold enough to address the crowd before the barge was turned back to London.⁴⁰³ Seeing that they

raised the crown to such dizzy heights of power and fame; and it was Richard himself who created the conditions in which, 'like glist'ring Phaethon', he was brought down,' says Saul. p. 434.

⁴⁰⁰ This revolt occurred for a combination of reasons, virtually all of which were prompted by the Black Death. The plague that struck Britain from 1348 killed almost half the population. Those agricultural workers who survived found their wages rising (by 200-300 %) as demand for their services by competing landlords increased. However, the landlords were reluctant to pay the higher wages or allow workers to move to rival estates. In addition, three poll taxes appeared. The 'Poll Tax' of 1380 was particularly hated, as it took no account of individual wealth or earnings and demanded the same sum from all, rich or poor.

⁴⁰¹ *Chroniques* Livre I et II. Livre II. § 49. ' . . . ilz cheminèrent devers Londres et abatoient maison d'avocas et de procureurs, et firent les chevaliers aler avec eulx, vouldissent ou non, et prindrent à Rocestre le chevalier qui gardien en estoit, apellé Jehan Mouton, et en firent leur capitaine, et lui couvint aler avec eulx; onques ne s'en pot excuser, autrement l'eüssent occis.'

⁴⁰² *Chroniques* Livre I et II. Livre II. § 49. 'Quant ilz virent la barge du roy, ilz huèrent si hault que c'estoit horrible chose à oïr, et n'ot mie le roy conseil qu'il presist terre.'

⁴⁰³ *Chroniques* Livre I et II. Livre II. § 49. 'Si dist le roy: "Seigneurs que voulez vous? Dictes le moy."'

were prevented from talking to their King, the crowd, according to the author, continued towards London destroying and ransacking buildings as well as freeing the prisoners in the King's prison on their way. When they reached London, they began threatening the Londoners who had closed the gates to the city. However, Froissart also claims that many Londoners were favourable to the rebels. Eventually the gates were opened and more than thirty thousand men went through London. Going from street to street, the rebels burnt the palace of Savoy, belonging to the Duke of Lancaster, robbed the houses of the Lombards and also killed all the Flemings they could find. Towards the evening, they moved towards the Tower of London, where they installed themselves. According to Froissart, the actions of the mob were clearly an outrage. The King, however, was advised by his counsellors to appease the crowd by 'fair words', rather than attacking them, he says.⁴⁰⁴

The next morning, the crowd continued to shout for the King to come and speak to them, and Froissart describes how the young King decided to meet the mob and their leader, Wat Tyler, at Mile End. And again the young King, according to Froissart, showed courage and determination. As they were going there, he says, the Earl of Kent and Sir John Holland, left the King because they feared for their life. Richard however, rode right in among the rebels and said very amiably: 'Good people, I am your lord and king. What do you want to say to me?' The rebels made demands to be freed 'both we and our heirs and our lands, so that we shall never again be serfs'. The King complied, a grant he is later said to have withdrawn.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ *Chroniques* Livre I et II. Livre II § 49. ' . . . et distrent les sages au roy: "Se vous les pouez appaisier par belles paroles, c'est le meilleur. Et leur accordez tout ce qu'ilz demandent, liement, car se nous commençons chose dont nous ne puissions à chief venir, nous et tout le royaume serions désers."

⁴⁰⁵ *Chroniques Livre I et II. Livre II. § 50. ' "Bonnes gens, je suis vostre roy. Que voulez vous dire?" Ils respondirent. "Nous voulons que tu nous afranches à tousjours; nous, noz hoirs et noz terres, et que jamais nous ne soions tenu serf." Dist le roy: "Je le vous accorde. Retrayés vous en vos maisons, et laissiés de par vous de chascun village ou hommes, et je leur bailleray lettres de quanque vous demandez."*

Froissart's portrayal of the King in Book II of his chronicles shows a young man who, in the same manner as his father at Crécy, wanted to prove himself; and although the setting is different, Richard's behaviour, as related by Froissart, was clearly worthy of admiration. By presenting himself with authority he was able to calm the crowd, something he also did the next day at Smithfield where he is described to have met with Wat Tyler and his men again. Here, however, Richard eventually lost his temper and ordered the killing of Tyler, an act the author clearly did not deplore. After the slaying of Tyler, Richard is described to have left his men, with the request that no one was to follow him. Acting with great courage, the young King addressed the crowd: 'Sirs, what more do you want? You have no other captain but me, I am your King, behave peaceably'. On hearing this, the majority of them were ashamed and began to break up, the author claims.⁴⁰⁶

Froissart's description of Richard's behaviour in connection with the Peasants' Revolt shows an enterprising and brave young king, able to face confrontation when his brothers and other men around him fled. By using words like 'captain' and pointing to his role as their guardian, the young king, in Froissart's portrayal, was both able to calm a crowd of grown men and make them feel ashamed of themselves and their behaviour. Although the setting is not the battlefield, the situation is described as equally frightening and chaotic. The emphasis Froissart has chosen to put on Richard's courageous actions and the lack of brave exploits performed by other noblemen shows that at this stage in the account (Book II of the *Chroniques*) Froissart had a positive impression of the new king and was set on presenting

⁴⁰⁶ *Chroniques Livre I et II*. Livre II. § 50. 'Ces villains qui là estoient assemblez virent leur cappitaine tuer, si distrent entr'eulx: "alons, alons et tuons tout!" Lors se commencierent à rengier en ordonnance de bataille, et dont le roy s'en ala devers ces vilains, et dist à ses gens que nul ne le sivist, puis vint à ses meschans gens et leur dist: "Que vous fault? Vous n'avez autre capitaine que moy: je sui vostre roy. Tenez vous en paix." '

Richard in a similar vein as his celebrated father who had also proven his *valor* at an early age, at Crécy.

However, when we meet Richard again in Book III (1387), both the themes and the chronicler's tone appear quite different. Instead we find a far more analytical portrayal of a young king surrounded by ambitious favourites and magnates set on renewing war with France. According to Froissart, the discontent of some of the greater men of the realm was great, and they believed the King to be relying too much on the friendship and advice of men like John and Thomas Mowbray, the Earls of Salisbury and Stafford, Earl Robert de Vere of Oxford, the Hollands - his half-brothers, and the Earl of Suffolk, Sir Michael de la Pole.⁴⁰⁷ Especially condemned was the King's relationship with Robert de Vere, and Froissart presents the problem by relating a conversation between the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the Earls of Salisbury, Arundel, Northumberland and Nottingham and the Archbishop of Canterbury:

Ce duc d'Irlande fait en Angleterre et du roy ce qu'il vult, et n'est le roy conseilliez forz de mesceans gens et de basse venue ens ou regard de princes. Et tant que il ait le conseil qu'il tient delez lui, les choses ne puevent bien aler, car ung royaulme ne puet estre bien gouverné ne ung seigneur bien conseilliez des mescheans gens. On voit qu'ung povre homme, quant il monte en estat et son seigneur l'aveuve, il se corrompt et destruit aussi son peuple et son pays; et est ainsi d'ung povre homme à femme, qui ne scet que c'est d'onneur, qui desire à tout engloutir et tout avoir, que d'ung loutre qui entre en ung estant et destruit tout le poisson que

⁴⁰⁷ SHF Livre III. Tome XII. § 2.

il y treuve. A quoy est-ce bon que ce duc d'Irlande est si bien du roy? Nous cognoissons bien son estraction et sa venue et que le royaulme d'Angleterre sera du tout gouverné par luy, et en laira les oncles du roy et ceulx de son sang. Ce ne fait pas à souffrir ne à soustenir. - "Nous savons bien qui le conte d'Asquessuffort est," disoient les autres, "il fut filz au conte d'Aubery d'Asquessuffort qui oncques n'eubt grace ne renommée en ce pays, d'onneur, de sens et de conseil, ne de gentilesce."⁴⁰⁸

It is of course unlikely that Froissart had any exact knowledge about the private deliberations of these men, although he could have received some inside information. His quotations of what the various actors said must therefore be seen as a textual construction functioning in an explanatory manner, pointing out what Froissart believed to be the opinions of the fraction unfavourable to Richard. Instead of culturing a relationship with the men who should be the King's natural advisors, Richard promoted men without the necessary background and reputation. In his account, men like Thomas of Gloucester or the Earl of Arundel could not accept that men with less status than them should be promoted or be asked to counsel the King in important political matters.

In Book I, Froissart relates how Bértrand du Guesclin was appointed to the office of constable of France, although he was of humble origins. However, contrary to de Vere, du Guesclin, in Froissart's portrayal, was well aware that his origins did not make him 'worthy' and tried to point this out to the King.⁴⁰⁹ Du Guesclin's excuses

⁴⁰⁸ SHF Livre III Tome XIV. § 183.

⁴⁰⁹ SHF Livre I. Tome VII. § 668. 'Lors s' escusa encores li dis messires Bertrans par une aultre voie et dist: "Chiers sires et nobles rois, je ne vous voeil, ne puis, ne ose desdire de vostre bon plaisir; mais il est bien verités que je sui uns povres homs et de basse venue. Et li offices de le

were not accepted according to Froissart. Instead Charles V is said to have praised du Guesclin's enormous symbolic capital and the fact that no man would disobey the orders of du Guesclin in war. De Vere, however, did not possess a symbolic capital that would make up for his humble origins. On the contrary, says Froissart, it was a widely held opinion that the honour of the de Vere family was not such that Robert deserved to be made a duke. However, what Froissart himself seems to have deplored the most was the fact that de Vere had left his wife, Philippa de Coucy, Countess of Bedford and the daughter of the Lord of Coucy, for a young maid-in-waiting of the Queen of England.⁴¹⁰ But the Duke felt so secure in the King's favour, Froissart says, that he believed that no one could harm him. However, de Vere's self-assurance was unfounded. When a report ran through England that a tax of one noble was to be levied on each hearth, by which the rich (who had several fires in their houses) would make up for the poor, the King's uncles who knew that this would be a great burden, decided to act, says Froissart.⁴¹¹ They caused the word to be spread that such a tax would be too damaging to the people and that there were in fact large sums of money in the royal treasury. Their strategy succeeded and according to Froissart, the Londoners approached Thomas of Gloucester for advice.

Demonstrating to the Londoners how they should proceed in order to get an account of the financial dispositions of the King, Gloucester is portrayed as the driving force

conestablie est si grans et si nobles qu'il couvient, qui bien s'en voeult acquitter, exercer et exploitier et commander moult avant, et plus sus les grans que sus les petis. Et veci messigneurs vos freres, vos neveux et vos cousins, qui aront charge de gens d'armes, en hos et en chevaucies: comment oseroi je commander sus yaus? . . . Lors respondi li rois et dist: "Messire Bertran, messire Bertran, ne vous escusés point par celle voie; car je n'ai frere, ne neveu, ne conte, ne baron en mon royaume, qui n'obeisse à vous"; . . . '

⁴¹⁰ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 184. See the discussion of the repudiation of Philippa de Coucy in Tuck, A: *Richard II*. p. 78 and p. 114.

⁴¹¹ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 184. ' . . . et y estoit mise hors une commune fame parmy Angleterre que on feroit une taille et que cascun feu paieroit un noble; si porteroit le fors le foible. Les oncles du roy savoit bien que ce seroit trop fort à l'esvoiturer et avoient fait semer parolles parmy Angleterre ens es citez et ens es bonnes villes, que le peuple seroit trop grevez, et que il y avoit ou devoit avoir très grant finance ens ou tresoir du roy. . . '

behind the events that followed.⁴¹² According to the chronicler Richard was obliged to call Parliament together to inquire into the management of the royal funds and the government of the country. During this meeting serious accusations were voiced, especially concerning the lack of order and justice in the realm.⁴¹³ Later, Sir Simon Burley, Richard's former tutor and a leading man in the government was found to show a deficit on the account he had been administering of 250,000 francs.⁴¹⁴ He was also accused of 'hoarding up silver and gold, salting it away in Germany and other countries'.⁴¹⁵ In addition, says Froissart, the common people said that Burley had wanted to steal the shrine of Saint Thomas in order to sell it abroad, an accusation Froissart himself clearly did not believe. However, 'this kind of talk became so general that Sir Simon Burley was gravely prejudiced by it', says Froissart, showing a definite understanding of the workings of political life and the effect rumours could have.⁴¹⁶ 'It was decreed, by the King's uncles and the burgesses acting with them, that he had deserved death on account of the charges against him.' Burley was beheaded, an event, which filled Froissart with dismay and anger, he says, because

⁴¹² SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 184. It should be noted that Gloucester's advice and detailed instruction to the Londoners occupies almost two pages in the SHF edition.

⁴¹³ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 185. 'Très redoubtez sire, salve soit vostre grace; mais justice est en vostre royaume trop foible, et vous ne savez pas tout ne povez savoir, car point n'en enquerez ne demandez; et ceulx qui vous conseillent s'en cessent de vous dire, pour le grant prouffit qi'ilz y prenent. Ce n'est pas justice, sire roy, de coper testes, ne poings, ne piez, ne pendre; cela est pugnacion. Mais est justice de tenir et garder son peuple en droit et de luy donner voye et ordonnance qu'il puist vivre en paix, par quoy il n'ait nulle cause de luy esmouvoir.'

⁴¹⁴ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 186.

⁴¹⁵ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 188.

⁴¹⁶ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 188. 'Tant se monteplierent ces parolles et amises que messire Symon Burlé fut grandement aggrévé et fut ordonné des oncles du roy et du conseil des citez et bonnes villes d'Angleterre, qui aveucques eulx estoient ahers et conjoints, qu'il avoit desservi pugnacion de mort sus les articles de sa fin.'

he had found him 'a very pleasant knight . . . and a man of great judgement' (grand sens).⁴¹⁷

Froissart's evaluation of Burley points us directly to what the author perceived as valuable: to be a pleasant knight, full of courage, wisdom and good judgement. In contrast stands his description of the King who instead of standing up for his former mentor chose to leave for the Welsh Marches with the Queen and de Vere, who had recently been appointed Duke of Ireland. However, according to Nigel Saul the accusation that Richard did not plead his former mentor's case is in fact wrong. 'Richard and his queen, the latter on bended knees, interceded on behalf of the former chamberlain, but Gloucester, strengthened by the support of the commons refused to give way,' says Saul who thus, gives a different impression of the King's attitude and actions than Froissart.⁴¹⁸ It should however be noted that Richard is described by Froissart to have expressed great anger when he heard of the beheading of his former tutor.⁴¹⁹

At this point in Froissart's account, Simon Burley seems to be the character acting with most honour and integrity, and the author clearly saw his death as a great injustice. However, contrary to what we may expect, it is not the scheming Gloucester who is condemned for his fate, but de Vere who is described to have

⁴¹⁷ Froissart later describes how Nicolas Brembre celebrates the valiant Simon Burley in a speech. SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 193. 'A la requeste du roy parla messire Nicolas Branbre et dist: ". . . Ja ont-ilz fait morir ce vaillant chevalier et preud'omme, sans nul tiltre de raison, messire Symon Burlé, qui tant de biaux services a faictes au royaume d'Angleterre . . .'

⁴¹⁸ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 194 - 95.

⁴¹⁹ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 189. 'Quant le roy Richard d' Angleterre . . . sceut la mort de messire Symon Burlé, son chevalier et l'un de ses maistres, qui tousjours l'avoit nourry et introduit, si en fut durement courrouciez, et dist et jura que la chose ne demouroit pas ainsi, et que à grant tort et pechié et sans nul titre de raison on l'avoit mis à mort. La royne d' Angleterre en fut durement dolente et en ploura bien et assez, pour tant que le chevalier messire Symon l'avoit amenée de Alemaingne en Angleterre.'

reassured the loyal Burley that the King would come to his rescue. 'Don't argue the point, do as they tell you,'⁴²⁰ says de Vere in Froissart's account, an advice Burley believed. 'If I did not believe that you could greatly help me, I would have left England for Germany where I would have been well received and could let things cool off a bit',⁴²¹ Burley is reported to have said, thus, indicating that he could have escaped his fate had he not been misled by de Vere.

De Vere, according to Froissart, should give further proof of his duplicity and lack of courage. The King, who at the time was dwelling in Bristol decided to move his forces against London and appointed de Vere his foremost commander.⁴²² On their side, the King's uncles, led by Thomas of Gloucester and the Londoners (who Froissart at this point states did anything the King's uncles commanded), decided to go against them.⁴²³ The two forces met at Radcot Bridge. However, reflecting that Gloucester would have him killed shamefully if he was caught, de Vere announced to his closest companions that he would rather escape than give battle. Hiding his real intentions, says Froissart, de Vere falsely encouraged his army to fight for the King's honour before he and his fellow noblemen fled and left the men of their side to fend for themselves. 'When the King's men saw them (flee), their courage forsook

⁴²⁰ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 186. 'En ce trouble, il ot un secret conseil entre le duc d'Irlande et luy, et lui dist: "Messire Symon, j'ay entendu que vous serez arrestez et mis en prison et tenus tant que vous arrés rendu la somme que on vous demande. Ne debatez rien, ales là où on vous envoie. Je feray bien vostre payx et l'eussent tout juré. Je doy recevoir du connestable de France LX. Mille frans pour la redemption Jehan de Bretagne, si comme vous savez que il me doit. Au fort je les vous presteray pour appaisier le conseil de present; en la fin le roy est souverain. Il le vous pardonnera et le vous quictera tout, car le pourfit luy doit retourner et non à altrui."

⁴²¹ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 186. 'Respondy messire Symon Burlé: "Se je ne cuidoye que vous ne me deussiez grandement aidier envers le roy et aussi à porter outre mon fait, je me departiroie hors d' Angleterre et m'en yroie en Alemaigne delez le roy de Boesme; je y seroie le bien venus et laisseroie les choses courrir un temps tant qu'elles seroient appaisiés."

⁴²² SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 191.

⁴²³ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 194. 'Les Londriens, comme gens tout conforté et tout appareilliez de obeir au plaisir et commandement des oncles du roy, . . . , respondirent . . .'

them', says Froissart, adding to the picture of de Vere as a cynical and cowardly man with no honour and little right to his elevated position.⁴²⁴

Somewhat unexpectedly, Froissart at this point shows the Duke of Gloucester behaving honourably and nobly towards the King's army, sparing their lives.⁴²⁵ When the Duke of Gloucester saw the disorder in the army facing him, says Froissart, a twinge of conscience seized him and he decided not to do his worst against them. Knowing that many if not all had been either forced or incited to come by the Duke of Ireland, Gloucester is said to have forbidden his men to kill any man unless he put up a defence; knights or squires should be taken prisoner and brought before him. His orders were obeyed, says Froissart, and only those who died in the press when they were riding against each other, were killed. While de Vere is portrayed as a man who, overwhelmed by the opposing forces, hides his intentions and later flees from his army, Gloucester, at this stage in the account, is portrayed as a merciful man who takes pity on the knights of his adversary.⁴²⁶ We should also note that Froissart omits the fact that it was in fact Henry of Derby who commanded the appellant army at Radcot Bridge.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 197. 'Si trestost que les gens du roy les veirent venir en ce convenant, ilz furent tous esbahis et ne tindrent nul arroy mais se deffoujierent et tournerent les dos, car voix general courut que le duc d'Irlande, leur cappitaine, s'enfuiot et ceulx de son conseil aussi.'

⁴²⁵ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 197. 'Quant le duc de Glocestre vey le convenant de ces gens assemblez contre lui, il luy vint ung remors de conscience et ne vout pas faire du pis qu'il eust bien peut, car bien savoit que tout ou en partie y estoient venus par contrainte et pour l'incitation du duc d'Irlande.'

⁴²⁶ However, it should be noted that Gloucester later beheaded John Beauchamp, John Salisbury and Nicholas Brembre - some of the noblemen present in the King's army.

⁴²⁷ Keen, Maurice: *England in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1973. p. 305.

Nigel Saul, Richard's modern biographer, says that it is very possible that Richard, at this point, in reality, was threatened with deposition.⁴²⁸ *The Chronicle of Whalley Abbey* Lancashire suggests that for a brief while Richard actually ceased to reign, says Saul. However, seeing that Gloucester and Henry of Derby could not agree on which of them was to take his place, Richard was eventually restored to his title. This, of course, is an account which differs widely from the one found in the *Chroniques*. According to Froissart, the intention of the fraction that has later been called the 'Lords Appellants' was not to deprive the King of his sovereignty, but to have councillors who could guide the young King down the right road and allow the kingdom to be restored.⁴²⁹ The overall impression is that although Froissart clearly was aware of the scheming of Gloucester and how he manipulated the Londoners, he essentially wanted to interpret the events as the efforts of loyal vassals to guide their young king. However, it should also be noted that although Froissart clearly reproaches Richard for his lack of sound judgement and failure to stand up for Sir Simon Burley, he does not outright condemn him at this stage. Instead his focus is on judging the King's evil councillors.

We know from other sources that the causes of the conflict between the King, de Vere and Gloucester were more complex than shown in Froissart's account. 'Chief amongst these was the matter of his [Gloucester's] inadequate territorial endowment,' says Nigel Saul. Exceptionally for a royal duke, Gloucester was dependent for his income on exchequer goodwill and it should therefore come as no surprise that he quickly became jealous of courtiers like de Vere who was richly rewarded by Richard. In addition, the Duke also held a more specific grudge against

⁴²⁸ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. p. 189.

⁴²⁹ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 199. 'Après la mort de Nicolas Branbre, veirent les oncles du roy que tous ceulx que ilz hayoient et vouloient oster hors du conseil du roy estoient mort ou eslongiet tellement que plus n'y avoit de raloiance, et convenoit que le roy et le royaume fust remis et refourmez en bon estat, car, quoyqu'ilz eussent mors et enchachiez les dessudiz, si ne vouloient-ilz pas oster au roy sa seignourie; mais ilz vouloient rieuler sus bonne fourme et estat à l'onneur de luy et de son royaume.'

de Vere arising from competition with the Earl for leadership of county society in Essex, says Saul.⁴³⁰ Lacking both landed wealth and influence at Court; Gloucester found it difficult to recruit a powerful following of his own to bolster his own prestige and to keep watch over his interests in the county. The financial situation of Gloucester and the internal disputes in Essex, are not, however, dealt with by Froissart who might have been little informed about this or may have found such information irrelevant to his account.

Instead he proceeds to show how the uncles who 'now wanted to put the kingdom back on a sound footing' decided to send for the King. The Archbishop of Canterbury was entrusted the task of persuading Richard to come back from Bristol. This, says Froissart, was something Richard did most unwillingly and only after he had been persuaded to do so by his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, and one of his 'wise' knights, Sir Richard Stury.⁴³¹ Back in London a general assembly of Parliament was held, says Froissart, and then a mass. After the mass, the King's uncles and the great magnates of the land renewed their homage to the King – 'in the way one should; hands clasped and kissing him on the mouth.'⁴³² However, says Froissart, it was easy to see by watching the ceremony which ones the King kissed readily and which not.⁴³³ Had he been able to, he would not have kissed them, says the author, 'but taken vengeance for the execution of Sir Simon Burley and his other knights who had been taken from him and put to death so undeservedly'.⁴³⁴ Whether this last

⁴³⁰ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 178 - 79.

⁴³¹ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 199.

⁴³² SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 200. ' . . . et baisoient par foy et hommaige, leurs mains jointes, ainsi comme il appartient, le roy en la bouche.'

⁴³³ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 200. 'Là veoit-on au baisier lesquelz le roy baisoit de bonne volenté et lesquelx non, car quoy qu'il le fesist, tout n'estoit pas en son amour, mais faire luy convenoit, car il ne vouloit pas yssir de rielle ne du conseil de ses hommes.'

⁴³⁴ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 200. 'Mais bien sachiez que, s'il eust oeut, autant dessus euls que pas ne pouvoit, il n'en eust riens fait, mais eust prins cruelle vengeance de la mort de messire

comment should be taken as a sign that Froissart, at this point, found the treatment of Richard to be overly harsh is difficult to say. However, the account clearly foreshadows future troubles.

Froissart's summary shows that he is keen to stress that the Appellants' actions were no real encroachment on the King's power, in the sense that the whole situation is portrayed as necessary to establish social order and harmony. In his account Gloucester and the rest of the Lords Appellant were driven to take action against the King and his council. However, I would also argue that although his tone and attitude towards Richard is increasingly negative, Froissart at this point in his narrative seems to express the view that Richard, being young, was not necessarily expected to have proven himself in all areas of political life. However, allowing so much space to his loyal following of courtiers - the 'marmosets'- and disregarding the advice of the more prominent men of the realm was clearly not a sign of 'sound judgement' and contributes to a picture of a king who was irresolute and lacking in determination. For a long time after the incidents related above, the King was not master of his own council, says Froissart.⁴³⁵

Froissart himself made a return to England in July 1395 and he probably received ample information about the events related previously during his stay.⁴³⁶ At this point he was also able to meet Richard in person and present him with a book, 'well written, illuminated and illustrated', he says.⁴³⁷ The book greatly pleased Richard, a

Richart Burlé et ses aultres chevaliers que on luy avoit osté et fait morir sans deserte.' Froissart here makes a mistake and writes 'Richart Burlé, instead of Simon.

⁴³⁵ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 200.

⁴³⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 140 - 66.

⁴³⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 167. ' . . . et vouldt veoir le roy le livre que je luy avoie aporté. . . . Il l'ouvry et regarda ens, et luy pleut très-grandement et bien plaie luy devoit, car il estoit enluminé, escript et historié et couvert de vermeil velours à dix clous attachiés d'argent dorés et richement dorés et roses d' or ou milieu, à deux grans frumaus dorés et richement ouvrés ou milieu de roses d'or.'

fact Froissart does not fail to mention in his account. Froissart also relates how he learned about Richard's recent military successes in Ireland, from a knight named Henry Crystede.⁴³⁸ He was also informed of Richard's intention to marry the young Isabella of France, from a knight named Sir Jean de Grailly, as well as the affaires of Aquitaine.⁴³⁹ Although the aging chronicler found the changes great and old acquaintances scarce, his account of his stay in England is by no means very negative, an observation that has enforced the impression some historians in the past have had of Froissart as an author reasonably sympathetic to Richard.⁴⁴⁰ Although this is a picture that will be nuanced in the following, I would argue that Froissart in the next part of his account of the affaires of England reserves his harshest criticism for Thomas of Gloucester, 'who was such that even the wise did not dare to speak in front of him,'⁴⁴¹ and later the Earl Marshal, Thomas of Mowbray.

Although Froissart in some respects seems fascinated by Gloucester, he was clearly not favourable to him or the views he represented. We should also note that the author consistently fails to mention that Thomas of Gloucester's abilities as a military commander were esteemed as far a field as Gascony.⁴⁴² Gloucester was inclined by nature to be proud and overbearing and was always in disagreement with the King's council, states the chronicler,⁴⁴³ who clearly did not approve of the Duke's haughty

⁴³⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 181.

⁴³⁹ Richard's first wife Anna of Bohemia died on 7 June 1394. The marriage was childless.

⁴⁴⁰ See George B. Stow in 'Richard II in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*' in *Journal of Medieval History* 11. 1985. pp. 333 -45.

⁴⁴¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 182. 'Et tout ce fut bien amentu des sages au conseil du roy, le duc de Glocestre absent, car en nulle manière devant luy on n' en ousoit parler.'

⁴⁴² See Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 177 – 80.

⁴⁴³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 240. ' Le duc de Gloucestre estoit de une autre matière et ordonnance, car il ne tenoit compte de nulluy, quoyque ce fuist le

and presumptuous attitudes.⁴⁴⁴ Gloucester took no real part in the government of the realm, he says, and only came when sent for by the King if it suited him. If he did go he was the last to arrive and the first to leave, and as soon as he had given his opinion, he insisted on it being accepted without question, says Froissart.⁴⁴⁵ This he did although the King always made himself humble when he was with the Duke, and never refused him anything, states the author, who thereby implicitly explains Richard's difficult situation.⁴⁴⁶ Froissart also reminds his readership of 'moult de crueuses and hastives justices' on the part of the Duke, especially the execution of Sir Simon Burley.

The Duke of Gloucester worked in all kinds of subtle and secret ways to win over the Londoners to him, says Froissart, and was eager to see his great-nephew the young Earl of March, grandson of the deceased Lionel, Duke of Clarence, on the throne of England.⁴⁴⁷ When this scheming did not work out as he planned, the Duke started stirring up the Londoners and whispered in their ear that they ought to demand to be relieved from the taxation that had originally been imposed on them to meet the

maisné de tous les frères, mais il estoit trop orgueilleux et présumptueux de manière, et en ce s'enclinoit sa nature, et mal concordant à tous les consauls du roy, se ils ne s'enclinoient de tout à sa volonté.'

⁴⁴⁴ See for instance the description of the attitudes of the duke and duchess of Gloucester towards Lancaster's second wife Katherine de Ruet, who they believed to be far beneath them in rank. Although the marriage was quickly accepted by the rest of the high nobility the Duke did not approve, according to Froissart. Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 239 - 40.

⁴⁴⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 5 - 6. 'Ainsi se devoit le duc de Glocestre . . . Et avoit acueillé le roy d' Angleterre son nepveu en très-grant hayne, et ne pouvoit nul bien dire, ne recorder de luy . . . Et quant le roy le mandoit, se bien luy venoit à plaisance, il y aloit, mais le plus du temps il demouroit, et lorsque il venoit devers le roy, c'estoit le darrain venant et le premier départant. Si trestost qu'il avoit dit son entent, il ne voloit point qu' elle fuist brisie, mais acceptée.'

⁴⁴⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 6. ' . . . le roy se humilioit tousjours envers luy, et ne sçavoit ce duc demander chose au roy, que le roy ne luy octroiait.'

⁴⁴⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 7 -8.

expenses of the wars.⁴⁴⁸ This they did, and in Froissart's account the Londoners got their reply from the loyal Duke of Lancaster, Richard's other uncle, who spoke so 'well and wisely' on behalf of the King, that the Londoners were calmed and submitted.⁴⁴⁹ Disappointed by these developments, Gloucester is said to have retired to his house at Pleshey, where he continued his scheming - 'always trying to find out new ways to make trouble in England and renew the war with France'.⁴⁵⁰

Around the same time, says Froissart, came the Count of Saint-Pol from France to see the King and his new Queen, the very young Isabella of France. According to the author, the King here explained to Saint-Pol how he found his uncle of Gloucester 'hard, rebellious and out of order' ('dur, merveilleux et rebelle') and was advised by Saint-Pol to take action. If Richard did nothing, said Saint-Pol, Gloucester would proceed to attract the hearts of the poorest knights of the country, who desired war more than peace,⁴⁵¹ a comment, which in my opinion should be interpreted as Froissart's own evaluation on the matter and his views on the potential danger in letting Gloucester continue his scheming. However, nothing was done and Saint-Pol's visit turned out to further Gloucester's plans. Some time later, says Froissart, a rumour started to spread that the Count of Saint-Pol had come from France to

⁴⁴⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 8 - 9.

⁴⁴⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 9 - 12.

⁴⁵⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 12 - 13. 'Les Duc de Gloucestre . . . toujours visant et subtillant comment il pourroit mettre ung tourble en Angleterre et trouver voye que la guerre fusit renouvellee en France . . .'

⁴⁵¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 14 - 15. 'Le conte de Saint-Pol s'esmerveilla de plusieurs paroles que le roy luy dist, et il en respondy que elles ne faisoient pas à souffrir, ne à soustenir: "Car monsigneur, dist-il, se vous le laissiés convenir, il vous honnira. On dist bien en France que il ne tire ne tent à autre chose, fors que les trèves soient rompues et la guerre renouvellee entre France et Angleterre. Et petit à petit il attraira les cuers de plusieurs povres bacelers de ce royaume, qui plus désirent la guerre que la paix; ne les vaillans hommes, se le pays s'esmuet et que gens d'armes et archiers se allient ensemble, ne seroient point creus, ne ouys, car raison, droitture et justice n'ont point de lieu, ne de audience, où mauvaisetié règne.'"'

discuss some way of giving Calais back to the French. The rumour disturbed the Londoners so much that they went to see Gloucester at Pleshey. In this meeting, the Count, according to Froissart, said nothing to calm them, instead he supported the accusations against Richard and Saint-Pol.⁴⁵² This, in turn, led the Londoners to seek out Richard at Eltham. Although Richard was able to assure the Londoners that Saint-Pol's visit had nothing to do with the affaires of Calais, he became very thoughtful and started to doubt his uncles, says the author.⁴⁵³

Soon after, says Froissart, Richard received information that his uncle of Gloucester and the count of Arundel, supported by the Londoners, were plotting against him. The plan, he was told, was to put the King and the young Queen under guard. Gloucester, Arundel and the King's two other uncles - Lancaster and York - should govern the realm.⁴⁵⁴ Deeply dismayed and fearing his uncle of Gloucester, Richard is described by Froissart to have turned to his uncles Lancaster and York for assurance and guidance, a support he did not receive. On the contrary, the uncles are reported to have told Richard not to worry about their 'unruly and rash' brother of Gloucester. But seeing that a crisis was indeed brewing, and that a great feud was developing between the King and Gloucester, the uncles did not wish to be involved, says Froissart, and withdrew to their own estates with their families. This was a decision they should live to regret, states the chronicler, because soon after their departure things happened which caused deep disquiet in the whole of England and

⁴⁵² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI pp. 15 - 16. 'Le duc ne les appaisa pas, ne amenry les paroles, mais les esleva et exaulça du plus que il pot, voire en disant ainsi: "Il n' y auroit que faire. Les Franchois voudroient bien qu'il leur euist cousté toutes les filles du roy de France et que ils euissent Calais en leur baillie."'

⁴⁵³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 17 -18.

⁴⁵⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 19 - 20

which would not have occurred if they had stayed, a comment indicating that in the author's opinion this was a bad judgement and maybe also cowardly on their part.⁴⁵⁵

Shortly after the Dukes of Lancaster and York had gone away, Richard decided on action. Reflecting that it was better 'to destroy than to be destroyed', says Froissart, he sought the help of his cousin, the Earl Marshal, in preventing Gloucester from ever being a threat again.⁴⁵⁶ In a dramatic account, Froissart shows how an ill-advised, revengeful and scheming Richard invited himself to Gloucester's house, where he later persuaded the Duke to come with him under the pretext of a meeting with York and Lancaster in London. On the way to London Gloucester was seized by the Earl Marshal, Thomas of Mowbray,⁴⁵⁷ and taken to Calais where he was incarcerated,⁴⁵⁸ and later killed.⁴⁵⁹ The Count of Arundel and the Count of Warwick, Thomas Beauchamp, were also seized and taken to the Tower of London.⁴⁶⁰ Arundel was later executed,⁴⁶¹ while Warwick received help from the Count of Salisbury who

⁴⁵⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 22 - 23. 'Pour tant que ces deux seigneurs dessus nommés veoient bien que les besoignes d' Angleterre se commencent à mal porter et grandes haynes nourrir entre le roy et le duc de Glocestre, à la fin que ils n'en fussent en riens demandés, ils se départirent de l'ostel du roy, euls et toutes leurs familles . . . Depuis se repentirent grandement les deux oncles du roy de ce que partis estoient; car tels choses advinrent assés tost après leur partement, don't toute Angleterre fur tourblée et esmeue, et qui point ne fussent advenues, se ils fussent demourés delés le roy; car ils y eussent autrement pourveu que ceulx ne firent, qui le roy conseilloyent.'

⁴⁵⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 26 - 28. 'Le roy Richart d' Angleterre nottoit bien toutes ces paroles que on luy disoit . . . et tant les notta et pensa sus, comme ymaginatif qu'il estoit, que ung petit après . . . il mist oser et hardement ensemble et dist en soy-meismes qu'il valloit mieux que premièrement il destruisist autry, que il fuist destruit . . .'

⁴⁵⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 27 - 28.

⁴⁵⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 71 - 73.

⁴⁵⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 75 - 76. See the discussion on Gloucester's death in Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 378 -79.

⁴⁶⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 73 - 74.

⁴⁶¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 77.

interceded with the King, claiming that Warwick was a very old man who had been persuaded by the other two to participate. He was condemned as a traitor but his punishment was later reduced to life-long exile at the Isle of Man.⁴⁶² Of the original Appellants only the two younger now remained: Henry, the Earl of Derby and the Earl Marshal, the one Froissart claims carried out the abduction of Gloucester.⁴⁶³

The Earl Marshal was more than willing to help his cousin get rid of his uncle, says Froissart,⁴⁶⁴ 'because he had received more favours from his cousin, the King, than from Gloucester'.⁴⁶⁵ The author portrays the Earl Marshal as playing a vital role both in the murder of Gloucester and also in the beheading of his own father-in-law, Lord Arundel, where the Earl Marshal is said to have been the one to blindfold him.⁴⁶⁶ Although Froissart at this point voices the opinion that Richard had created a

⁴⁶² Froissart claims it to be Isle of Wight. Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 78 – 79.

⁴⁶³ Derby was difficult to attack because he was the son of John of Gaunt, but there are several indications that Richard never hated these two men as much as the older Appellants. Froissart says that Richard had greatly rewarded the Earl Marshal, and we know from other sources that the same was true for Derby. Both Derby and the Earl Marshal had opposed the execution of Simon Burley, Richard's tutor, and had publicly asked the others to have mercy on him. This may explain why Richard not only decided not to bring charges against the two, but to reward them for their services to 'King and Country'. The Earl Marshal became Duke of Norfolk and Henry became Duke of Hereford. See Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. p. 382 and p. 398.

⁴⁶⁴ In reality this might not be the truth. In the Introduction to his book *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, Chris Given-Wilson gives a short, but comprehensive overview of what is probably a more accurate account of the events. Although the Earl Marshal, Thomas Mowbray, may have played an important role in what might have been the murder of Gloucester, Walsingham, an author who was no friend of the Earl Marshal, says that he was very reluctant to arrange the murder, and only did so after he was threatened with death himself if he refused. Evidence suggests that the Earl Marshal quickly became disillusioned with the King's behaviour, says Given-Wilson. See Chris Given-Wilson: *The Chronicles of the Revolution*. Manchester 1993. Introduction.

⁴⁶⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 27. 'Le conte Mareschal qui plus amoit le roy que le duc de Gloucestre, car il luy avoit fait moult de bien, tint la parole du roy en secret, fors à ceulx desquels il se vouloit aidier, car il ne pouvoit faire son fait seul.'

⁴⁶⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 77.

situation where no one dared to speak against him,⁴⁶⁷ the author apparently has no understanding for the actions of the Earl Marshal who is portrayed as both greedy and traitorous.

One day when the Earl Marshal was discussing matters with Henry, the Earl of Derby, says Froissart, Henry made a remark concerning the King's behaviour and voiced the view that if Richard continued his course he would drive the nobles out of England. 'He shows clearly that he has no desire to increase his country's power, but to destroy it,' Derby is reported to have said.⁴⁶⁸ The Earl Marshal made no reply, says Froissart, but found the Henry's opinion highly offensive to the King. As for Derby, Froissart writes that he meant his words to be treated confidentially, and never thought they would be repeated. But the Earl Marshal, who is already characterised as traitorous, could not keep the words to himself, says Froissart, and decided 'since the devil was no doubt working on his mind and what must be, must be' to disclose the Earl of Derby's words to the King in such a public way that an open scandal would be unavoidable.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ Froissart says that the King at this point had so subdued the great lords of England that none dared to show their dissatisfaction openly. Richard had spread the word throughout England that anyone who spoke in favour of either the Duke of Gloucester or the Earl of Arundel would be branded as false, a miscreant and a traitor and would incur his extreme anger, says Froissart. Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 83 and pp. 89 – 90.

⁴⁶⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 91. ' "Sainte Marie! beau cousin, dist le conte d'Erby, et quelle chose a nostre cousin le roy enpensé à faire? Veult-il mettre hors d'Engleterre et essorer tous les nobles?"

⁴⁶⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 91. 'Si se advisa (ainsi que le diable luy entra en la teste et que les choses tournent ainsi que elles doivent tourner et advenir, ne on ne les puet fuyr, ne eschiéver), que ces paroles seroient si notoirement remonstrées devant le roy et là où il y auroit tant de nobles d'Angleterre, que tous s' en esbahiroient. Et vint, assés tost après ces paroles dittes entre luy et le conte d' Erby, devers le roy pour luy complaire.'

Froissart's account deviates quite a lot from what we know about the causes for the ensuing dispute from other sources,⁴⁷⁰ and it has recently been argued by Nigel Saul that Froissart systematically reverses the roles of the two lords throughout. According to Saul, the Earl Marshal had participated in the arrest of the three former Appellants and afterwards received vast amounts of rewards from the King. Still, in 1397 he seemed to feel himself insecure in the King's favour, a concern he voiced in confidence to Henry of Derby who in turn is said to have betrayed the Earl Marshal by sharing their private conversation with the King. Other sources claim that the Earl Marshal in fact warned Derby of a plot by some of the King's closest men to destroy the Lancastrian inheritance, says Saul.⁴⁷¹ And apparently it was Derby who reported the conversation to the King, not the Earl Marshal, in a parliament at Shrewsbury where the Earl Marshal was probably not present.⁴⁷² At a later parliament at Bristol, the King ordered that the conflict created by this betrayal of confidence be settled 'according to the law of chivalry', by wager of battle.⁴⁷³

In Froissart's account, however, the events unfolded differently. Loaded with what he perceived as vital information, the Earl Marshal urged the King to summon all the

⁴⁷⁰ In the introduction to his book *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, Chris Given-Wilson points out that in other sources it was the Earl Marshal who approached Henry Bolingbroke to warn him of a potential plot against them both. However, Henry of Derby broke his confidence and told his father, John of Gaunt, about the allegations at which point the Earl Marshal seems to have panicked, fearing that Gaunt would divulge the allegations in parliament. Adam of Usk says that the Earl Marshal tried to prevent Gaunt from reaching parliament by setting death traps. In fact, the Earl Marshal probably did not attend the parliament where Froissart claims that he laid out the allegations against Henry. The Earl Marshal was stripped of all his offices and ordered to meet before the King within a fortnight, which he did. At that meeting he denied all the charges put forward by Henry of Deby and demanded the right to defend him-self in personal combat. As we can be seen, these events are very different from what we find in Froissart's account of the events. See Chris Given-Wilson: *The Chronicles of the Revolution*. Manchester 1993.

⁴⁷¹ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. p. 396.

⁴⁷² Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. p. 399.

⁴⁷³ The records of the parliamentary committee are related in *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, ed. Given-Wilson, Chris, Manchester 1993. pp. 89 – 93.

members of his family at a festival at Eltham where the accusations were voiced in public.⁴⁷⁴ The Earl of Derby, who Froissart describes as coming forward in 'all innocence', and 'standing stiffly'⁴⁷⁵ when he heard the accusations, was more than willing to defend himself in single combat. The whole court was in a state of confusion, says Froissart, but the Earl Marshal could not take back what he had said and appeared to have no intention of doing so. 'He was far too great and haughty, with a heart full of pride and presumption', says the author.⁴⁷⁶ But before the battle took place, at the last moment, says Froissart, Richard insisted that the two men should be exiled instead - Nottingham for life, Henry of Derby for ten years, a punishment which was clearly perceived by Froissart as unjust, because he describes the judgement to be condemned as far away as in France.⁴⁷⁷

After the sentence had been received,⁴⁷⁸ the two men left England, and Froissart describes how more than forty thousand people were in the streets to see Henry of Derby off, crying and lamenting his fate.⁴⁷⁹ Accompanied for a while by the maire of

⁴⁷⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 92 - 93.

⁴⁷⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 93 - 94. ' . . . le conte d' Erby, qui nul mal n' y pensoit . . . fut tout esbahy de ces paroles, et se traist arriere, et se tint tout droit ung espace sans riens dire . . . '

⁴⁷⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 95. 'Vous devés bien croire et sçavoir que toute la court pour la journée fut grandement tourblée, et moult de seigneurs, barons et chevalliers courrouchiés de ceste advenue, et grandement en requoy blasmoient le conte Mareschal, mais ce qu'il avoit dit, il ne le povoit retraire, et monstroit par samblant que il n'en faisoit compte, tant estoit grant et haultain, de cuer orgueilleux et présumptueux.'

⁴⁷⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 97. 'Et autres gens disoient, qui parloient plus seurement: "Les roy d' Angleterre ne monstre pas à estre sage, ne bien conseillié, quant pour paroles et oiseuses et où il n' appartient nulles arme à faire, il laisse ainsi entrer en hayne l'un sur l'autre su hauls et nobles hommes de son sang et lignage comme sont le conte d' Erby son cousin germain et le conte Mareschal, . . . '

⁴⁷⁸ Although Froissart later describes how Henry met with Richard who reduced his cousin's banishment from 10 to 6 years. Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 110.

⁴⁷⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 111.

London, Henry set out for the Continent and Paris where he, according to the author, was well received by the noblemen of France.⁴⁸⁰ His father, John of Gaunt, on the other hand, was so unhappy about the state of the affaires of England and that his son had been banned from England for such a 'small cause' that he became ill and died, says Froissart.⁴⁸¹ The problems in the realm augmented and it was a generally held opinion, especially in the city of London, says Froissart, that Richard should pardon and recall his cousin after the death of Lancaster. Richard, however, refused and declared the Lancastrian land confiscated and extended Derby exile to life.⁴⁸² This was a decision, not only condemned in England, according to Froissart, but also amongst the noblemen of France who had found Henry 'gracious, courteous and good'.⁴⁸³ According to the author, opinion had been broadly favourable to Henry from the moment Henry arrived at the French court, and he had received many favours and offers from prominent French noblemen. In fact Henry was so highly esteemed by the King of France and his uncles that they offered him the daughter of the Duke of Berry in marriage, a marriage Richard, according to Froissart, prevented

⁴⁸⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 114 – 16. 'Et fu le dit conte d'Erby acconvoié et accompaignié de tous ces seigneurs de France et mis à son hostel.'

⁴⁸¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 137. ' . . . le duc Jehan de Lancastr qui vivoit en grant desplaisance tant pour son fils que le roy avoit mis hors d'Angleterre à petit de cause, que pour le povre et petit gouvernement qu'il veoit en son nepveu le roy Richart, et sentoit bien le dit oncle que s' il persévéroit en cel estat longuement et on le laissaist convenir, le royaume seroit perdu. Et tomba le duc de Lancastr en une maladie de laquelle il moru et trespasa de cè siècle.'

⁴⁸² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 150 - 51. "'Helas! disoient le povre pueple. Et quelle chose ont vos enfans fourfait quant le roy leur oste et tolt l'eritage de leur pere et de leur tasyon et ce qui doit ester leur par droite hoirrie et succession? Certes ceste besogne ne puet longuement durer, ne demourer ainsi, ne nous ne le pourrions veoir, ne souffrir.'"

⁴⁸³ 'The words are 'gracieux, doux, courtois et traittable'. See Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 140 – 41. In the *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1388 - 1422*, vol ii, pp. 674 - 76, ed. M.L. Bellaguet (Documents Inédits Sur l'Histoire de France) we find a vivid description of the honourable treatment Henry received in France. 'The [French] king accommodated not only him, but all his followers in royal residences, entertained them and plied them with gifts', the chronicler of Saint-Denys says. Henry had arrived in Paris in mid-October and the chronicler of Saint-Denys was in a good position to observe the favourable treatment accorded to Henry, and his account of the events is confirmed by other sources.

by sending the Duke of Salisbury to Paris with letters to the French King claiming that Henry was a traitor.⁴⁸⁴

As we may see, Froissart is adamant that Richard disinherited his cousin, an opinion contested by modern historians. In a recent article C.D. Fletcher convincingly shows that legally Richard did not confiscate the Lancastrian lands. 'The section of the Parliament Roll frequently cited as the confiscation of the Lancastrian inheritance does not, in fact, contain such an act', says Fletcher.⁴⁸⁵ Also Nigel Saul in his book on Richard II notes that the King seems to have retained the possibility that either Henry or his son might one day be restored.⁴⁸⁶ However, helped by a vast romance literature describing disinherited noblemen standing up to unjust lords and kings, Henry was encouraged to portray himself as disinherited, says Fletcher. 'By appearing as the disinherited hero, Henry stood to unite all those who were disaffected by Richard's actions in 1397-99. His position was strengthened by a language of disinheritance that appealed to the deep moral resonance of these themes. Yet, the fact remains that, in law, Henry had not been disinherited.'⁴⁸⁷

'Les fortunes de ce monde sont bien merveilleuses, et la fortune fut bien terrible et merveilleuse en celle saison pour le roy d'Angleterre', says Froissart introducing the rest of his account of the downfall by a prophesy he said he received from an old knight he met when he was first in England in the company of Queen Philippa.

⁴⁸⁵ Fletcher, C.D: 'Narrative and Political Strategies at the Deposition of Richard II' in *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004) pp. 323 - 341. Yet, Fletcher also argues that it remains that Richard did act in a number of ways which would have given Henry grave cause for concern. This includes revocation of letters patent and Henry not being allowed to appoint his own officials.

⁴⁸⁶ Saul, Nigel: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 402 - 04. We know that Richard was quite fond of Henry's son, the later Henry V, and included him in his retinue on numerous occasions.

⁴⁸⁷ Fletcher, C.D: 'Narrative and Political Strategies at the Deposition of Richard II' in *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004) pp. 323 - 41.

According to the author, this prophecy stipulated that the Crown of England should not go to any of Edward III's sons, but return to the House of Lancaster. 'These were words I remembered when I saw Henry, Count of Derby, becoming King of England,' the author says, alerting his readership to the outcome of the events in his following account.⁴⁸⁸

Richard, as he is portrayed in Froissart's account, continued to be widely criticized by members of the nobility, even those, he says, that rode with him on one of his campaigns to Ireland.⁴⁸⁹ Their grievances were similar to those that were set forward by Henry of Derby in his conversation with the Earl Marshal, and again 'evil council' is described as the most prominent accusation against Richard. The King was also deserted by some of his foremost magnates, like Thomas of Percy.⁴⁹⁰ However, in Froissart's account, not only noblemen voiced accusations against Richard. Also the rest of the population of England became restless and began to engage in internal strife. All the courts of justice were closed, to the dismay of honest men seeking 'tranquillity and fair dealing, with the payment of their lawful debts', says Froissart.⁴⁹¹ In addition, people began to be attacked by a class of people who roamed the country in troops and gangs. 'Merchants did not dare to ride about upon their business for fear of being robbed, and they did not know to whom to turn for

⁴⁸⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 142 - 43. 'Ces paroles me revindrent au devant, quand je vey en mon temps Henry, conte d' Erby, roy d' Angleterre.'

⁴⁸⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 152. 'Vous devés savoir que plusieurs barons, chevalliers et escuiers d' Angleterre, quoyque ils chevauchassent en compaignie du roy Richart en ce voyage d' Irlande, si se contendoient-ils mals de luy, et n' y estoient pas de bon cuer, et en parloient moult souvent l'un à l'autre. . .'

⁴⁹⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 154 - 55.

⁴⁹¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 156.' Le roy d' Angleterre . . . tenant ses estas et ses oiseuses, les hommes généralement parmy Angleterre se commencèrent moult fort à esmouvoir et à eslever l'un contre l'autre. Et estoit justice close par toutes les cours d' Angleterre, don't les vaillans hommes, les prelatz et les paisibles qui ne vouloient que paix, amour et simplese et paier ce qu'ils devoient commenchèrent très-grandement à esbahir.'

protection or justice' says the author.⁴⁹² Such misdeeds began to multiply rapidly, Froissart continues, until complaints and lamentation were heard all over England.⁴⁹³ 'Things have changed for the worse since the death of King Edward . . . If this state of affairs goes on for long, England will be ruined, . . . we do not have a king worth anything. His only concern is his own pleasure and he does not seem to care how things are going, so long as he gets his own way'.⁴⁹⁴ This harsh evaluation of Richard attributed to the 'good' people of England may have been partially shared by Froissart. However, the author also says that the same people began to allege that King Richard's intentions in France might not be favourable to the English. 'Now this King Richard has sent his brother, the Earl of Huntingdon to Calais. How easy it would be for him to make some bad secret pact with the French and give back Calais to them. If Calais is given up we English would feel utterly humiliated (esbahis); and with good reason, because he will then have lost the key to the kingdom of France'.⁴⁹⁵ In my opinion, it is unlikely that Froissart himself believed that Richard was in deed trying to give Calais back to the French as he does not mention this in other parts of

⁴⁹² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 156. ' . . . et n'osoient les marchans chevalchier, ne aler en leurs marchandises, pour la doubte d' estre rués jus et desrobés, et ne s'en sçavoit à qui plaindre, qui leur en fesist droit, raison et justice. . . . '

⁴⁹³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 157. ' . . . se commencèrent ces meffais trop grandement à mouteplier . . . Et disoient les bonnes gens: "'Le temps nous est mué de bien en mal depuis la mort du roy Edouard, de bonne memoire, que justice estoit tenue et gardée grandement et souffisamment."

⁴⁹⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 157. 'Et disoient les bonnes gens: . . . "Le temps nous est mué de bien en mal depuis la mort du roy Edouard . . . Ceste chose ne se puet longuement tenir en cel estat, que Angleterre ne soit perdue sans recouvrer; car nul ne va au devant, ne nous n'avons point de roy qui riens vaille. Il n'entent que à toute oyseuses et à accomplir ses plaisances, et n'a cure, à ce qu'il monstre, comment la chose voist, mais que sa volenté soit faite."

⁴⁹⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 157. 'Et disoient les bonnes gens: . . . "Il y fait pourveir, ou nos ennemis et malvueillant seront resjouis de nos adversités. Jà a ce roy Richart mis et envoyé à Calais son frère le conte de Hostidonne. Il n'y aroit que faire que par luy se pourroient faire aucuns mauvais et couvers traittiés devers les François et Calais rendre, qui tant est propice et nécessaire au royaume d'Angleterre. Et, se le cas advenoient que Calais fuist rendue aux François, oncques gens ne furent plus esbahis que Anglois seroient et à bonne cause, car ils auroient perdu les clefs du royaume de France.' "

his account, for instance in connection with Richard's meeting with Saint-Pol. The accusations concerning Calais should therefore be seen as the author's opinion of how the people of England described and explained the state of affairs.

Richard, however, did nothing to appease his subjects, according to Froissart, but chose instead to leave England to go on what was seen as yet another of his futile Irish campaigns, leaving the situation at boiling point. The critical state of affairs was recognised by the noblemen of the realm. However, in Froissart's account it was the Londoners, not the prominent noblemen, who decided that the only man who could restore internal peace and justice was Henry of Derby. The Londoners decided in a secret meeting with some of the prelates and knights of the realm to send the Archbishop of Canterbury⁴⁹⁶ to Paris to ask the Earl of Derby to come back to claim the English throne.⁴⁹⁷ At Henry's hostel in Paris the Archbishop described the troubled state of England to the Earl, and 'the violence and destruction that were taking place in many parts of the country', says Froissart. Henry was also told that it was the Londoners, 'with certain prominent men, prelates and others,' who wanted to put a stop to the unrest, and had unanimously agreed that the Earl ought to return to England. Henry, said the archbishop, would be made King, since Richard of

⁴⁹⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 162. ' Si fut pryé l'archevesque de Cantorberie, qui estoit homme d'honneur, d'excellence et de prudence, à faire ce message, lequel pour le prouffit commun du royaume d'Angleterre s'accorda bien légierment de ce faire à la prière et requeste des Londriens.'

⁴⁹⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 161. 'Les cytoiens de Londres comme chiefs de royaume d'Angleterre et puissans que ils sont, pour obvier et pourveir aux grans meschiefs, lesquels estoient apparens en Angleterre, orent secrets consauls ensemble, et aveuc euls aucuns prélats et chevalliers dudit pays, ens esquels consauls il fut dit et arresté que on enveroient querre le conte d'Erby qui se tenoit à Paris ou là près, et le feroi-on retourner en Angleterre et, luy revenu, on lui remonstreroit le mauvais gouvernement de ce roy Richart, et luy metteroit-on avant qu'il voulsist entreprendre la gouverne de l'éritage et couronne d'Angleterre, et on le feroit roy luy et ses hoirs à demourer perpetuellement, et qu'il voulsist tenir ledit royaume en tous bons usages'.

Bordeaux had done or permitted so many infamous things that the whole population was complaining bitterly and was ready to rise against him.⁴⁹⁸

The support for Henry was thus, overwhelming, but contrary to what we might have expected, Henry, in Froissart's description, was by no means thrilled by the prospect to overthrow his cousin. On the contrary, Froissart describes Henry's initial reaction as reluctant.⁴⁹⁹ However, after deliberating with his men, Henry decided to act.⁵⁰⁰ Having assembled ships and men in Brittany, Henry reached Plymouth and advanced to London where he, according to Froissart, was heartily welcomed by the burgesses. Together they decided that they would march with all speed towards the King, 'whom the Londoners and others now called plain Richard of Bordeaux, with no courtesy titles', says the author.⁵⁰¹ The citizens had already covenanted with the Earl of Derby that he should be their lord and king and should act in all matters on their advice, states Froissart.⁵⁰² In return, they promised to be loyal to him always and to help him attain his ends, says Froissart. Further to this agreement, Henry

⁴⁹⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 163 – 64. 'Et là luy remonstra et recorda le dit archevesque la débilitation du royaume d'Angleterre . . . car Richart de Bourdeaulx avoit tant fait et consenty à faire de fais infames que tout le poeuple se douloisoit amèrement et se vouloit eslever contre luy.'

⁴⁹⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 165. 'Le conte d' Erby eut ot tout au long parler l'archevesque de Cantorbie, si ne respondy point si tost, mais s'appuia à une fenestre qui regardoit dedens les gardins, et pensa là une espace et ot mainte ymagination; et quant il se retourna vers l'archevesque, il dist: " Sire, vos paroles me donnent moult à penser." '

⁵⁰⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 166 - 67.

⁵⁰¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 175.

⁵⁰² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 175. 'Et jà avoient les Londriens traittié devers le conte d' Erby que il seroit leur seigneur et roy et se ordonneroit de tous poins par leur conseil, et, à ceste ordonnance et aliance faire, le conte d' Erby mist en termes que il emprendroit le fais et la gouverne du royaume à demourer perpétuellement à tousjours à luy et à son hoir.'

stipulated that he and his heirs should assume responsibility for the government for all future time. 'This the Londoners swore to him, put it in writing and sealed it.'⁵⁰³

As we may see from this scene and other comments in Froissart's account Henry is essentially portrayed as the 'instrument' of others, especially the mighty Londoners, rather than the 'driving force' behind the events. Caroline M. Barron, in an article on Richard II's relationship with the Londoners, asserts that Froissart's analysis is 'neither particularly subtle, nor particularly accurate' at this point and that the role played by the Londoners in Richard's deposition was minor compared with the part played by the retinues of the disaffected nobility.⁵⁰⁴ Froissart however, consistently portrays the Londoners as Henry's most important supporters. The importance he attributes to them is also seen in the description of the subsequent events.

The Earl of Derby and the Londoners had their spies coming and going, says Froissart,⁵⁰⁵ and were told that Richard had withdrawn to a castle called Flint where he was surrounded only by the members of his household. Henry was also told that Richard seemed to have no intention of fighting, but wanted to escape from his predicament, possibly by negotiation.⁵⁰⁶ After deciding to seek out Richard at Flint, says Froissart, Henry decided to ride ahead with two hundred men leaving the

⁵⁰³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 176. 'Et ainsi les Londriens luy jurèrent, escripvirent et séellèrent à tenir et luy eurent en convenant de luy faire jurer et séeller tout le demourant du royaume d' Angleterre . . . '

⁵⁰⁴ See Caroline M Barron: 'Richard II and London' in *Richard II. The Art of Kingship*. Eds. A. Goodman and James L. Gillespie; and 'The Deposition of Richard II' in *Politics and Crisis*. pp. 132 - 49.

⁵⁰⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 181. 'Le conte d'Erby et les Londriens avoient leurs espies alans et venans, qui leur rapportoient tout l'estat du roy, et aussi faisoient chevalliers et escuiers qui se venoient rendre au conte d' Erby de leur volenté.'

⁵⁰⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 181. 'Nouvelles vindrent au dit conte d'Erby et à son conseil que le roy estoit retrait et enfermé ens ou chastel de Fluich, et n'avoit pas grans gens avec luy fors que son hostel tant seulement, et ne monstroient pas que il voulsist la guerre; ne la bataille, fors à yssir de ce dangier, se il pouvoit, par traittié.'

Londoners and the rest of his army behind. This he did solely on his own initiative. 'Le conte d'Erby s'arresta, . . . et ot conseil de soy-meismes et non d'autry', states the author, a comment that underlines the fact that although Henry normally followed the will of the Londoners, his decision to seek out Richard with only a few men was his own.⁵⁰⁷ However, Froissart, also proceeds to show how the Londoners at this point felt it necessary to gain Henry's assurance that he would not be tricked to let Richard get away.⁵⁰⁸

Froissart's description of the events at Flint is highly dramatic. Banging loudly at the door of the castle where a frightened and deserted king was hiding, Henry is the master of the situation from the very beginning. Recognising the authority of Henry and the weak position of their King, Richard's men urged their King to receive his cousin.⁵⁰⁹ Richard complied and in the meeting that followed between the two men, - the climax of Froissart's account of the downfall of Richard - we meet a King highly reduced, shattered by the prospects of being surrendered to the raging Londoners. Henry, on the other hand, is described to have shown great courage by stepping into the castle with only twelve men. The asymmetrical relation between the two men is also seen in Froissart's account of how Henry reassured his distraught cousin that he would protect him against the Londoners. Fearing the mob and recognising that he

⁵⁰⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 181.

⁵⁰⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 181 - 82. 'Dont respondy le conte d'Erby et dist en telle manière: "Nennil, ne vous doubtés en riens. Tout ce qui est emprins à faire, sera fait." '

⁵⁰⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 183. 'Sire, en ceste requeste n'a que tout bien. Vous le povés bien faire venir à vous douzième tant seulement et oyr quel chose il voeult dire; c'est vostre cousin et un grant seigneur en ce pays. Il vous puet bien partout accorder, s'il veult; car il est moult grandement amé ou royaulme d' Angleterre, et par espécial des Londriens qui l'ont remandé de par delà la mer et lesquels sont si fort eslevés présentement contre vous.'

had no other option, Richard accepted to do 'whatever Henry asked of him', according to the chronicler.⁵¹⁰

In Froissart's account Richard put his fate in the hands of his cousin who is described to have allowed Richard to keep his household just as it was 'without removing or changing any of his attendants,' a comment that shows that Henry to some extent let Richard keep his dignity.⁵¹¹ Henry is also described to have sheltered Richard from the Londoners and issued strict orders that no one was to take anything from the castle or lay hands on any of Richard's men. Henry, who the author at this point starts to call Duke of Lancaster, was now the lord, and 'Richard of Bordeaux', the inferior. Probably to further enhance the impression of the shift in status between the two men, Froissart relates the following story, which he says was told to him and which he claims was observed by more than thirty thousand people:

King Richard had a greyhound called Blemach, says Froissart, 'a truly magnificent dog', which would follow no one except the King. As the King and the Duke were standing talking in the middle of the courtyard, ready to mount their horses and discussing how to proceed, the greyhound left the King and went to the Duke of Lancaster, 'showing him all the marks of affection which he used to show to the King'. According to the author, the Duke of Lancaster, who had never seen the dog before, was puzzled by the dog's behaviour and asked Richard for an explanation: 'Cousin,' said the King, 'it demonstrates that you are of great importance, while I am

⁵¹⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 186. ' "Non! dist le roy qui s'effroia grandement de ces paroles, car il sçavoit bien que les Londrien le haioient, et dist ainsi: "Et vous, cousin, n'y povés-vous pourveir? Je ne me mets point volentiers en leurs mains; car je sçay bien que ils me hayent et ont hay ung long temps, je qui suis leur sire." Dont respondy le conte d' Erby et dist: "Je n'y voy autre pourvéance, ne remède, fors que vous vous rendés à moy; et quant ils scauront que vous serés mon prisonnier, ils ne vous feront nul mal, mais il vous fault ordonner, et toutes vos gens, de venir à Londres et tenir prison en la Tour de Londres."'

⁵¹¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 186. ' . . . et luy fist avoir son estat tout entier sans muer, ne brisier, ainsi comme il le avoit eu en devant.'

of very little. . . the dog is hailing and honouring you today as the King of England which you will be, while I shall be deposed . . . '. The Duke of Lancaster understood perfectly, states the author, and stroked the greyhound, which, according to the author, henceforth ignored Richard of Bordeaux and followed him.⁵¹²

The symbolism of the scene is powerful. Richard is defeated, a fact which is recognised by Richard's companion animal, the most loyal and noble of dogs, the greyhound.⁵¹³ The dog, which had hitherto always been loyal to Richard, followed what Froissart calls its 'congnissance naturelle', and deserted his master for Henry. Although Richard was the anointed king, the greyhound revealed to all that it was Henry who was now the lord of the realm. By relating this scene I also believe that Froissart is able to relieve some of the tension connected to Henry's actions, because it enhances the impression that what happened was in fact God's will.

⁵¹² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 187. 'Le roy Richart avoit ung lévrier, lequel lévrier on nommoit Blemach, très bel lévrier oultre mesure, et ne vouloit ce chien congnoistre nul homme fors le roy seulement, et lorsque le roy devoit chevauchier, celluy qui l'avoit en garde, le lassoiet aler, et ce lévrier venoit tantost devers le roy et le festoioit et luy mettoit ses deux piés sus ses epaules. Et adont en advint que le roy et le conte d'Erby parlans ensemble emmy la place de la court du dit chastelet leurs chevauls tous ensellés . . . ce lévrier nommé Blemach qui coustumier estoit de faire au roy ce que dit vous ay, laissa le roy et s'en vint tout droit au duc de Lancastre, et luy fist toutes les contenancez telles que en devant il faisoit au roy Richart, et luy assist ses deux piés sus les espauls, et le commença moult grandement à conjouir. Adont le duc de Lancastre point ne cognoissoit le lévrier demanda au roy et dist "Mais que veult ce lévrier faire?" - "Cousin, respondy lors le roy, ce vous est une moult grande signification et à moy une très-petite" - "Comment, dist le duc de Lancastre, l'entendes-vous?" - "Je l'entends ainsi, dist le roy. Cestuy lévrier vous recueille et festoie aujourd'huy come roy d'Angleterre que vous séres, et j'en seray déposé et débouté, et le lévrier en a congnissance naturelle; si le ténes delés vous, car il vous sieuvra et jà ne vous eslongera." Le duc de Lancastre entendy et notta bien ceste parole, et conjouy fort le lévrier, equal oncques depuis ne le habaadonna, car plus ne voulu sieuvrir le roy Richart, mais très-bien le duc de Lancastre, et ce veirent et sceurent eulx plus de trente mille hommes'.

⁵¹³ The medieval image of the dog is characterized by a fundamental ambiguity, says Ben Ramm in an article from 2005 on the significance of the *chienet* in Old French Romance. It is represented either as an unclean, quasi-heretical hell-hound, or else gentrified and even partly humanized as man's best friend. See Ramm, Ben: 'Barking Up the Wrong Tree? The significance of the chienet in Old French Romance.' in *Parergon* 22.1. 2005. The greyhound was generally revered as a noble animal and a symbol of goodness and luck. Although a hunting dog, used primarily at the end of the hunt when the quarry was in sight, the greyhound was valued for their docile temper at home, and often allowed inside as pets.

The story of the dog resembles an account given by Adam of Usk who claims to be an eyewitness to some of the events. Usk, too, claimed to have seen Henry with a greyhound 'of wonderful nature', that after the death of his first master, the Earl of Kent, Richard's half-brother, had sought the company of King Richard.⁵¹⁴ However, at one point during the events of late 1399, the dog left Richard's court and turned up at Henry's quarters in Shrewsbury where it was made welcome because Henry believed 'that thereby his good fortune was foretold', says Usk, who like Froissart makes a point of the fact that the dog would no longer recognise Richard. To what extent Froissart knew of Adam of Usk's account of the events is uncertain, but the fact that both authors relate a similar story indicate that the story of the dog deserting Richard was a widespread story in the aristocratic milieu of the age.⁵¹⁵

According to Peter Ainsworth, Froissart included the passage relating the events at Flint where the greyhound Blemach left Richard in favour of Henry because he wanted to both safeguard his vision of what kingship should be as well as to give an unfailing transmission to posterity of the ancient values of chivalry. If Froissart 'succeeds in making Henry Bolingbroke a just man who refuses to countenance the thought of regicide, the best means available to him with which to guarantee the resurrection of *proece* and simultaneously, that of his own (chivalrous) conception of the monarchy is a device which might legitimately be seen as the ultimate metonymic transference in the *Chroniques*, the scene in which Richard's greyhound . . . deserts its royal master before an audience of thousands.'⁵¹⁶ By relating the story of

⁵¹⁴ See *Chronicon Adae de Usk*, ed. E. M. Thompson. 1904, pp. 191 - 202. Quoted here from *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, translated and annotated by Chris Given-Wilson. pp. 242 - 43.

⁵¹⁵ The *Dieulacres chronicle* also make an allusion to greyhounds when he says that it had been pre-ordained by a prophecy that the esquires of the Duke of Lancaster should subdue 'like greyhounds' the pride of the hated beast the white hart, Richard's emblem. See *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, ed. Given-Wilson, Chris, Manchester 1993. p. 155.

⁵¹⁶ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*. Oxford 1990. p. 214.

the dog, Froissart not only shows that Henry was revealed to all as the true King, but also that Richard himself recognised and accepted it. In this way the dilemma regarding the rival claims of birth and legitimacy on the one hand, and of effective fitness to govern on the other, is resolved, says Ainsworth. This view, I believe, is supported by Froissart's later descriptions of how Richard himself gave up his crown, recognising his own failures and his cousin's superiority.

In Jean Creton's account in the *Metrical History*⁵¹⁷ things happened somewhat differently at Flint. Creton was a Frenchman, valet-de-chambre to King Charles VI, and probably also a servant of the Duke of Burgundy. He tells us in his account, mainly written in verse, that he was an eyewitness to the meeting at Flint. Although partisan to Richard, Creton gives a fairly credible account of the events and does not demonise Henry. According to Creton, Henry sent the Earl of Northumberland to Richard, making him false promises and claiming that 'He [Henry] desires nothing that is yours, for you are his immediate and rightful king; and he truly regrets the great mischief and wrong that he has committed against you . . . and will come before you most humbly on his knees and sue for mercy'. According to Creton, Richard was duped, taken prisoner by Northumberland and later taken to Flint where he awaited the arrival of Henry. This is in opposition to Froissart's statement that Richard was in fact hiding - not a prisoner - at Flint.

Henry arrived at Flint accompanied by many knights and esquires, upwards of one hundred thousand men, says Creton, a description that differs from Froissart's description of Henry's great courage when he arrived at Flint accompanied only by two hundred men and later stepped into the castle with only twelve of his closest

⁵¹⁷ See Jean Creton's account in *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, ed. Given-Wilson, Chris, Manchester 1993. pp. 13 - 152. Also see Creton, Jean: *Metrical History*, ed. and trans. Webb, pp. 55 - 176; *Collection des Chroniques Nationales Francaises*, ed. J. A. Buchon, xxiii, Paris, 1826. pp. 341 - 415.

followers. Creton also claims that many of the men in Henry's army were men who had hitherto been Richard's. Henry's troops surrounded the castle, says Creton, and when the imprisoned King had eaten, Henry called out in a 'stern and savage voice, "bring the King's horses", and he was brought two little horses that were not worth forty francs . . .'. This is a very different description from Froissart's where he puts strong emphasis on the respect, protection and reassurance Henry offered the defeated Richard. 'It was in this way that Duke Henry captured King Richard, his lord', says Creton who clearly saw nothing honourable in Henry's actions. In Creton's opinion, this was a fierce assault on an anointed king and he shows how Richard was overwhelmed by trickery and by the sheer use of manpower. Not surprisingly there is little said about the Londoners and no mention of a greyhound. According to Creton, Richard was told that Henry was not seeking to overthrow him, but would accept peaceful settlement on three conditions: that his inheritance be restored to him, that a parliament be summoned over which he would preside as steward; and that five of the King's councillors be put on trial for treason. This, Richard is said to have accepted, but was fooled.

According to Nigel Saul, we should not readily believe the accounts of Lancastrian origin, which maintain that Richard freely resigned his crown to Henry of Derby. Indeed, right to the end, says Saul, Richard was to take a principled stand on his anointed status.⁵¹⁸ In Saul's opinion it is also very likely that Henry had far greater ambitions on the outset than stated by Froissart. In spite of the fact that Froissart early in his account of the events says that overthrowing Richard was the stated goal for the Londoners, and shows how Henry signed an agreement to this effect immediately after arriving in London, Froissart still proceeds to portray Henry as being almost naively ignorant of this prospect, just wanting to regain his lands and

⁵¹⁸ Nigel Saul: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 418 - 19.

rightful position. Seemingly, it was the events at Flint that ultimately made Henry realise that it might be right for him to seek the throne.

At no point in Froissart's account do we get the impression that it was Henry's personal ambition to become king, and not once is he portrayed as scheming or making political plans to overthrow his cousin. His participation in the group of the Lords Appellant is described as the result of a wish to seek justice and the subsequent dispute with the Lord Marshal is described as a conflict where he was unjustly accused. The fact that in reality it was most probably Henry of Derby who instigated the conflict and accused the Lord Marshal of treason, supports the hypothesis that Froissart wanted to convey an image of Henry as a man propelled toward power by external forces, not driven by his own ambition.

This impression is further enhanced in Froissart's description of Richard's meeting with Henry in the Tower after he had been brought to London, where the former King is said to have insisted on abdicating. Recognising that he had treated Henry and other members of his blood unjustly, Richard is said to have recognised that pardon was not an option for him. Therefore, he said, he would give up his crown freely. 'Et pour tant, de bonne et libérale volenté, je vous veuil résigner l'éritage de la couronne d'Angleterre, et vous prie que le don et résignation prendés amiablement', are the words Richard is said to have used.⁵¹⁹ Richard, in Froissart's account, is himself the ultimate judge of his actions, both in the scene at Flint where he interprets the meaning of the actions of the greyhound Blemach and here in the

⁵¹⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 198 - 99. 'Nouvelles vindrent au duc de Lancastre que le roy Richart le demandoit et que il avoit grant désir de parler à luy. . . . le roy Richart . . . recueilly le duc de Lancastre moult doucement et se humilia très-grandement envers luy, ainsi que celluy qui se veoit et sentoit en grant dangier et péril de sa vie, et luy dist: "Cousin, je regarde et considère mon estat . . . Et tant que à tenir règne, ne à gouverer poeuple, ne à porter la couronne, je n'ay que faire de penser . . . Cousin, tout considéré, je sçay bien et congnois que grandement je suis mesprins envers vous et envers plusieurs nobles de mon sang en ce pays, par lesquelles choses je sens et congnois que jamais je vendray à paix, ne à pardon."'

Tower.⁵²⁰ Accepting that he was so unloved by his people that he could no longer rule, Richard gave up his throne of his own free will.

It is difficult to say if Froissart's account at this point was marked by Lancastrian propaganda or if he had other reasons for presenting the events as he did. What is clear, however, is that it is not very likely that the events in the Tower of London unfolded as the author claims. The abdication is for instance contested by the author of *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* who says that Richard refused to give up the throne for a considerable amount of time after being put in the Tower.⁵²¹ The author of the *Chronique de la Traison et Mort* also shows Richard enraged by his imprisonment and Henry 'falling on his knees', assuring that nothing 'unreasonable' should be done to the King. The asymmetry, as we may see, is here in Richard's favour and he shows his regality even in prison. The *Chronique de la Traison et Mort* is of course at least as biased as Froissart's, but according to Nigel

⁵²⁰ The image of the perpetrator admitting to his wrongful actions is in fact a literary tableau common in medieval literature. According to the author *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* John Lackland admitted to treating the Marshal unjustly on his deathbed, and urged the Marshal to take care of his young son after his own death. HGM Verses 15174 - 87.

⁵²¹ *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre*, ed. B. Williams. 1846. According to the author of *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* this is what happened: "The King asked the Duke of Lancaster, "Why do you keep me so closely guarded by you men-at-arms? I wish to know if you acknowledge me as your lord and king, or what you mean to do with me". The Duke replied, "It is true that you are my lord and king, but the Council of the Realm has ordered that you should be kept in confinement until the day of the meeting of Parliament". Then was the King in great wrath, but he could not help himself and said to the Duke that he did great wrong, both to him and the Crown. The Duke replied, "My lord, we cannot do otherwise till the Parliament meets." The King was so enraged by this speech that he could scarcely speak, and paced twenty-three steps down the room without uttering a word; and presently he broke out thus: "You have acknowledged me as your king these twenty-two years, how dare you use me so cruelly? I say that you behave to me like false men and like false traitors to their lord; and this I will prove, and fight four of the best of you, this is my pledge", saying which the king threw down his bonnet. The Duke of Lancaster [Henry] fell on his knees and besought him to be quiet till the meeting of Parliament, and there everyone would bring forward his reason." "At least, fair sirs, for God's sake let me be brought to trial, that I may give an account of my conduct, and that I may answer to all they would say against me." Then said the Duke of Lancaster: "My lord, be not afraid, nothing unreasonable shall be done to you". And he took leave of the King and not a lord who was there durst utter a word'.

Saul, an abundance of reports supports the view that Richard was tenaciously clinging to at least the outward vestiges of his regality and was resolutely defiant while in the Tower, before he finally gave in on the 29th of September 1399.⁵²² 'At no time in the lengthy exchanges with his interlocutors did he accept the idea of directly transferring his rights to his supplanter', says Saul who points to the description given by the *Dieulacres* writer who says that Richard eventually surrendered his crown and 'placed it on the ground and resigned his right to God'.

According to Froissart, however, a repentant and humble Richard received the following reply from Henry when he stated his wish to renounce the throne:

Quant le duc de Lancastre entedy ceste parole, si respondi et dist: "Il convient que à ceste parole soient veus et appellés plusieurs de trois estas d'Angleterre. . . . par ce point vous appaiserés et adoucirés grandement l'ayr et le maltalent de plusieurs hommes d'Angleterre; car pour obvier à tous maléfices qui très-fort estoient eslevés en Angleterre par faulte de justice, qui de long temps n'avoit ne lieu, ne règne, ay-je esté de delà la mer mandé, et me veult de fait le poeuple couronner, et court voix et renommée par toute Angleterre que à la couronne je ay et ay tousjours plus grande action de droit que vous n'avés eu . . . Et, se vous eussiés les euvres du prince de Galles enssieuvy et creu bon conseil, ainsi que bon fils à son léal pover en tout bien doit enssieuvir les oeuvres de son père, vous fuissiés demouré roy et en vostre estat. . . .'⁵²³

⁵²² Nigel Saul: *Richard II*. Yale 1997. pp. 420 - 21.

⁵²³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 199 - 200.

'It was to end the disorders, which had arisen in the country through the break-down of the judicial system, that I was sent for from beyond the sea,' Henry is reported to have said, thus pointing to the will of the people and the well-being of the realm. However, had only Richard heeded good advice, 'like a good son should endeavour to follow the example of his father', and not relied on evil councillors his fate would have been different. Froissart, I believe, shared the opinions stated in this first part of Henry's speech. However, I find it less certain that he shared the opinions voiced in the second part of this speech, discussed in the next section.

Froissart's account ends with the events of the last months of Richard's life and his death. Richard, he says, willingly renounced the Crown during an assembly at the Tower of London.⁵²⁴ Afterwards a parliament was held at Westminster where Henry was duly elected by the prelates and clergy of most of England as well as the dukes, earls and nobles of the realm and also the commoners of each town.⁵²⁵ Froissart, however, deals only briefly with these more technical affairs of the deposition. Henry's coronation on the other hand is described in detail: The Duke, he says, was riding bareheaded and wearing the King of France's emblem around his neck. Mounted on a white charger and wearing the blue garter on his left leg he was followed by his son and the rest of his retinue. He rode right through the city of London and was escorted to Westminster by a great number of noble burgesses, Lombards and merchants of London. In addition, all the grand masters of the guilds, each guild adorned with their particular emblems, were present together with six thousand others.

⁵²⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 202.

⁵²⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 203.

The streets through which the Duke passed were covered with various kinds of hanging decorations, and white and red wine flowed from nine fountains in Cheapside, each with several jets, says Froissart who proceeds to describe how the Archbishop of Canterbury mounted a platform. At each of the four corners of it, the archbishop explained to the people how God had sent them a man to be their lord and king and asked if they all agreed that Henry should be anointed and crowned king. To this, they unanimously answered yes, says Froissart, and 'stretched out their hands to pledge him loyalty and obedience'.⁵²⁶

In spite of this, Henry and his men may have feared that the support was not so unanimous as it may have seemed at the coronation, and according to the author, they especially feared the reaction of the French King who was allied to Richard through his marriage to Isabella of France. Having received reports that the French might be gathering a force to come to Richard's rescue, Henry was approached by men who said that as long as Richard of Bordeaux was alive, neither him nor the country would be secure.⁵²⁷ Henry, however, pointed out the promise he had made Richard, and said that he would not budge on the matter unless the King of France or somebody else made an attack on him.⁵²⁸ According to Froissart, the attack came shortly after when the Earls of Salisbury, Huntingdon and Kent as well as Thomas Despenser tried to attack Henry first at a tournament at Oxford, and later at his court at Windsor.

⁵²⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 204 - 09. ' . . . tout le poeuple tendirent leurs mains contremont en luy promettant foy et faissent grant liesse'. According to Froissart, Henry was duly consecrated, 'anointed in six places' and received the Sword of Justice and the Crown of St. Edward. At dinner, a knight named Dymoke came riding in, fully armed and challenged any 'knight, squire or gentleman' who cared to say that Henry was not the rightful king. The King also had this challenge cried by a herald-at-arms at six different places in the hall, but no one came forward, says the author.

⁵²⁷ The French, who previously had taken Henry so much to their heart, had started to grow anxious over the situation in England and to worry about the young Queen, says Froissart.

⁵²⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 222.

Enraged by the attacks, Henry sought out Richard in the Tower where he is said to have accused his cousin of conspiring. According to Froissart, Richard pleaded his innocence, claiming that he 'was not aspiring to a different role than his present one',⁵²⁹ a statement the author, who at no point shows Richard participating in the planning of the plot, seems to have believed. It should also be noted that Froissart does not condemn the three noblemen mentioned above and describes how the Earl of Huntingdon defended himself 'like a valiant knight' when he and the Count of Kent were attacked and killed by the bailiff of Cirencester.⁵³⁰ Valiant men both in England and elsewhere mourned Kent's tragic fate, says the author, 'because he was a young and good boy that had been advised against keeping the company that he did, but his uncle and the Duke of Salisbury persuaded him.'⁵³¹ All the conspirators were killed and beheaded, and their heads sent to London in baskets. After this, says Froissart, the country remained in a fairly peaceful state.

But the peaceful state should not last, and Froissart relates how it was made known to Henry and his advisers that the French were preparing for war.⁵³² In this situation, Henry was again advised to put his cousin to death, a request he initially turned down, according to Froissart, pointing to his previous promise to Richard. But

⁵²⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 226. 'Richard de Bourdeaulx s'excusa trop fort et dist, se Dieu luy peuist aydier et valloir à l'âme, de tout ce il ne sçavoit riens et ne tendoit jamai à avoir plus grant estat et que bien luy souffissoit.'

⁵³⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 229. 'On enteny à assaillier le conte de Hostidonne, car bien se deffendoit comme chevalier vaillant qu' il estoit, mais la force fut si grande sur luy qu'il ne la pot sourmonter, et fut atteré et occis en armes . . .'

⁵³¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 229. ' . . .et avec luy son nepveu le jeune conte de Kent qui depuis fut moult plaint de plusieurs vaillans hommes en Angleterre et ailleurs, car il estoit jeune et beau fils, et moult envis se mist en celle compagnie, mais son oncle et le conte de Saslebéry luy boutèrent.'

⁵³² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 232. 'Et se le conte de Hostidonne et conte de Saslebéry fuissent en vye, on suppose que les François euissent passé la mer, et avoient jà grans aliances en Angleterre.'

Henry's knights insisted that as long as the French knew Richard to be alive they would always make war on the English.⁵³³ To this, says Froissart, Henry made no reply, but went out of the room and left them talking together. He went to see his falconers, placed a falcon on his wrist,⁵³⁴ and became absorbed in feeding it. Not many days afterwards, says Froissart, a true report ran through London that Richard of Bordeaux was dead. 'From what cause he died, I do not know', states the chronicler.⁵³⁵ The connection between the meeting of Henry and his knights and Richard's death is nevertheless made by the fact that he reports Richard's death immediately after the description of Henry's deliberations with his knights.

Froissart's chronicles starts out with the tragic history of Edward II who married the daughter of the French King and gave his son so many reasons to overthrow him.⁵³⁶ It finishes with the equally tragic story of the downfall of Richard II. The symmetry between the beginning and the end of the chronicles is thus, evident, says Michel

⁵³³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 232 - 33. 'Si fut dit au roy: "Sire, tant que Richart de Bordeaux vive, vous, ne le pays, serés en seur estat". Respondy le roy: "Je croy bien que vous dittes vérités, mais tant que à moy, je ne le feray jà morir, car je l'ay pris sus. Se luy tenray son convenant, tant que apparant me sera que fait il me ara trahison." Si respondirent les chevaliers: "Il vous vauldra mieulx mort que vif, car tant que les François le sçauront en vie, ils s'efforcheront tousjours de vous guerroyer, et auront espoir de le retourner encoires en son estat, pour la cause de ce que il a la fille de roy de France. Le roy d'Angleterre ne respondy point à ce propos et se départy de là et les laissa en la chambre, et il entendy à se faulconniers et mist ung faulcon sur son poing, et ainsi il se oublia à le paistre'.

⁵³⁴ The animals described in medieval texts often have symbolic meaning attached to them, though the meaning attributed is by no means universal or unambiguous. Still, medieval men were fond of legends attributing peculiar behavior to animals, and relating those examples of behavior to human virtues or vices: thus, the animals became emblems of such virtue or vice. While a hawk or falcon was a venerable symbol of majesty and power, heraldic writers add that the Falcon denotes someone eager, or hot in the pursuit of an object much desired; if seated on its 'rest' or perch it may signify a bearer who is ready and serviceable for high affairs.

⁵³⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI p. 233. 'Depuis ne demourèrent gaires de jours que renommée couru parmy Londres que Richart de Bourdeaulx estoit mort. La cause comment ce fut, ne par quelle incidence, point je ne le sçavoie au jour que je escipvy ces chroniques'.

⁵³⁶ SHF Livre I. Tome II. § 4 – 5.

Zink. 'Symétrie entre les destin des deux misérables rois, tous deux victimes dans leur brutalité et de leur faiblesse, tous deux déposés et assassinés dans leur prison, et de surcroît tous deux mariés à une fille du roi de France nommée Isabelle . . .' ⁵³⁷ In the first redactions of the first book, Froissart says nothing of what happened to Edward II. However, in the last redaction of the first book, the Rome manuscript, Froissart says that he received information about the fate of Edward II when he was at Berkeley castle in September 1366. Here an old squire told him that the King had in fact been killed in prison. ⁵³⁸ Although the author does not say so explicitly, we cannot help to get the impression that Richard too was helped towards his death.

Some sources claim that Richard was starved to death, while the author of the *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* reports that Richard was attacked in prison. In keeping with the rest of his account the author of *Traison et Mort* depicts Richard valiantly defending himself against his attackers 'like a good and loyal knight'. ⁵³⁹ Walsingham's version says that Richard became so depressed that he refused food and drink and 'wasted away through natural debility'. ⁵⁴⁰ Froissart, on his side, evades the whole issue, and, as a result, leaves us with a question, rather than an answer.

But the question regarding the nature of Richard's death is not the only question we are left with after having read Froissart's account of the events and fate of King

⁵³⁷ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 103 - 6.

⁵³⁸ Froissart, Jean: *Chroniques. Dernière rédaction du premier livre. Édition du manuscrit de Rome Reg.lat. 869*. ed. George T. Diller. Genève. 1972. Chap. XIII, 1. 111 - 114. p. 90.

⁵³⁹ The author of *le Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* also claims that the knight who gave Richard his deathblow confessed to what he had done and lamented the fact that they had killed their rightful lord. See *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, ed. Given-Wilson, Chris, Manchester 1993. pp. 230 - 34,

⁵⁴⁰ Walsingham, T: *Annales Ricardi Secundi*, in *The Chronicles of the Revolution*, ed. Given-Wilson, Chris, Manchester 1993. pp. 224 - 29.

Richard. According to Michel Zink, the last part of Froissart's work, which describes the downfall of Richard II in 1399 - 1400 bears witness to a more lucid and severe look on the events he describes.⁵⁴¹ Froissart, he says, is no longer blinded by 'le panache chevaleresque'. Instead, the author seems to have learned a lot about the failings and shortcomings of the great and powerful. Zink's observation, I believe is right. But what exactly are the values conveyed in this part of the account, and what according to the author was the relationship between kingship and chivalry?

4.2. The ideal king

Froissart's account of the downfall of Richard II is extraordinarily rich in information, colourful and tragic. However, it is also difficult to discern what values and ideals the chronicler is attempting to convey in his narrative. When summing up his analysis of the Rome manuscript of Book I composed around the same time as the author set down his account of the downfall of Richard, Ainsworth says: 'It is as though Froissart does not quite succeed in reconciling the many perceived contradictions between the old, trusted ideal, and new, model behaviour that are reflected in his pages'.⁵⁴² I would argue that the same is the case for the last book of his chronicles, Book IV, and it is easy to see why some scholars in the past have argued that Froissart was rather sympathetic to Richard, while others have claimed the opposite.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 95 - 96.

⁵⁴² Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 305.

⁵⁴³ See George B. Stow in 'Richard II in Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*' in *Journal of Medieval History* 11 .1985. pp. 333 - 45.

As we have seen, Froissart consistently portrays Henry as the more courageous of the two men, the more valiant and generous, in particular towards his cousin after the capture at Flint. Froissart also downplays the role played by Henry in the revolt of the Lords Appellant and omits that he was the commander at the battle of Radcot Bridge. These observations, in my opinion, supports the view that Froissart was trying to avoid showing Henry in what he may have felt was a too close alliance with Thomas of Gloucester. During Henry's stay in France, Froissart describes how the Earl's valour and wisdom were recognised by the French nobility who took him so much to their heart that he was offered the daughter of one of the most prominent magnates in marriage. These prospects were in turn shattered by the intervention of the vengeful Richard who is also described to have disinherited his cousin. When sought out by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Paris, Froissart portrays Henry as exclusively responding to the needs of the English people, and especially the powerful Londoners. Derby, in Froissart's account, was their saviour, not a man seeking to restore his honour or gain justice and revenge for himself. The decision to march against his cousin was not one that Henry took on his own, but in accord with the Londoners and his closest advisors. All these events contribute to the picture of Henry as an essentially honourable and loyal magnate who became the victim of conspiracy.

In contrast, the picture of Richard, who initially, in Book II, is portrayed as being able to assert himself and act with courageous authority even when prominent magnates felt frightened, increasingly becomes negative as the work progresses, and he is frequently shown as irresolute and lacking in determination. His failures are summed up in a speech the author attributes to John of Gaunt after his son, Henry of Derby, had been banned from England:

'Nostre nepveu le roy d'Angleterre honnira tout avant qu'il cesse. Il croit conseil senestre moult legièrement, qui le destruirá

et son royaume aussi. Il perdra, se il vit longuement, trop simplement et à petit d'armes faire, tout ce qui a tant cousté de payne et de travail à nos prédicesseurs et à nous aussi. Il laisse et seuffre engendrer et nourrir haynes en ce royaume entre les nobles et les grans dont ils devroit estre amé, servy et honnouré, et le pays gardé et doubté. . . . Il ne veult oyr parler homme qui bien luy veuille dire, ne enseigner, ne croire, ne entendre, fors sa volente. Il ne peult mieulx destruire son royaume que de mettre trouble et hayne entre les nobles et les bonnes villes. Francois sont trop soubtils: pour ung mal et meschief qui nous vient, ils vouldroient que il nous en venist dix, car autrement ne pèvent-ils recouvrer leurs dommages Et on voit clèrement (et a-on vu tousjours) que tous royaumes qui d'euls-meismesse divisent, sont désolés et destruis.' Ainsi disoit le duc de Lancastre.⁵⁴⁴

Although Froissart may not have agreed with all the accusations voiced above, the speech, I believe, provides information about the author's perception of kingship:⁵⁴⁵ Foremost amongst the accusations against Richard was that he had let himself be guided by evil councillors and 'marmousets' unable or unwilling to give the King 'prudent conseil'. To be able to recognise good advise, was, as we have seen in the

⁵⁴⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 98 - 99. Gaunt is said to have pointed out several examples of societies ridden by internal division: 'On l'a veu par le royaume d'Espagne, par le royaume de Napples et par la terre de l'Église, et voit-on encoires tous les jours par le fait de papes toute leur destruction. De reschief on l'a veu par le pays de Flandres comment d'euls-meismes ils se sont destruis. On le voit aussi présentement par le royaume de Frise, lequel nos cousins de Haynnau ont enchargié en guerre, comment les Frisons aussi d'euls-meismes, se sont destruis et destruiront. Aussi de nous-meismes, se Dieu n'y pourvoit, nous nous destruirons: on en voit trop grandement les apparans.' I believe that Froissart here voices his own opinion.

⁵⁴⁵ For a further discussion on this 'Sermon on Kingship and Internecine see Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*. Oxford 1990. p. 106.

previous chapter on Froissart's descriptions of warfare, one of the marks that distinguished good kings and magnates like Edward III, John the Good and the Black Prince. It is also a point made by other authors of the day like Christine de Pizan who, in her *Book of the Body Politic*, says that the good prince is he who honours the wise.⁵⁴⁶ Richard, however, is described to have trusted and rewarded men who sought to fulfil their own ambitions on numerous occasions. King Richard, says Froissart, had a character 'that was such that when he took a liking to a man, he elevated him so much that people were amazed', a comment underlining the King's lack of even-handedness and wisdom in the distribution of patronage. The King also believed the advice of such *parvenus* more easily than any other king who had ever reigned in England, says Froissart, thus, indicating that the King was gullible and easily manipulated.⁵⁴⁷

In Froissart's opinion, Richard was easily impressionable and easy to persuade. This is a fairly negative evaluation, but one which also underlines the fact that, in Froissart's opinion, the problem was not so much that Richard himself had dubious intentions, but that he lacked strength of character or wisdom. Only once do we hear that Richard decided to act in a violent manner completely on his own accord, namely when he decided to attack the Lords Appellant.⁵⁴⁸ Reflecting that it was better 'to destroy, than to be destroyed', says Froissart, the King, who had been left by his uncles to fend for himself against Gloucester, turned to the Earl Marshal for

⁵⁴⁶ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. p. 39.

⁵⁴⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 83 and pp. 89 – 90. 'Le roy Richart d' Angleterre avoit une condition telle que quant il enchargeoit ung homme, il le faisoit si grant et si prochain de luy que merveilles, ne nuls n'osoit parler du contraire, et créoit si légèrement ce que on luy disoit et conseilloit que oncques roy qui esté en Angleterre, don't mémoire fuist de grant temps.'

⁵⁴⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 26 - 28. See above, note 456. p. 147.

help. As we have seen above, the author states that the dukes of Lancaster and York were to regret that they had left the King's court at this stage, and that the following events would not have occurred if they had stayed. These comments, I believe, show that Richard, in Froissart's opinion, was not the only one to blame for the later events.⁵⁴⁹

Froissart's portrayal of Richard is not the portrayal of an 'evil' king like for instance Pedro the Cruel, whom the author says was 'si crueulz et si plains d'erreur et de austerité',⁵⁵⁰ but a king unable to make wise decisions and show charismatic leadership. In Froissart's Book III and IV, Richard is consistently shown as a king unable to make people rally around his political idea to establish lasting peaceful relations with the French. Instead, his intention to wage war elsewhere rather than on France was met with confusion and disbelief, and as we may see above, Gaunt states that Richard was wrong in seeking an alliance with the French. The consequences of Richard's actions would be 'the ruin of the realm' and loss of the 'inheritance' given to him by his forefathers. However, in my opinion, Froissart himself did not directly disapprove of Richard's ambition to wage war elsewhere than in France, a view I find supported by the account of how the news of Richard's intention to marry the daughter of the French king were received in France. Although many of the noblemen of the French King's council questioned the proposal, he says, and believed it unwise for the French King to ally himself to the English, a young man, Rainault de Corby, who was 'valiant and wise' and 'who understood well how the affaires of France should be ordered,' was able to demonstrate to the French that the English King had good intentions and that the

⁵⁴⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 22 - 23. See above, note 455 p. 147.

⁵⁵⁰ SHF Livre I. Tome VI. § 547.

marriage was a wise move.⁵⁵¹ In his advice to the French King Corby is also said to have pointed out that it was Thomas of Gloucester - not Richard's other uncles, the Duke of Lancaster and the Duke of York - who was opposed to the plans of establishing lasting peace with France.

Another passage in the chronicles supporting the view that Froissart was favourable to peace is his account of how a 'prudent and valiant' knight named Robert le Mennoit (later called Robert the Hermit) received a vision during a storm when he was returning from his travels abroad.⁵⁵² In this vision, Robert was told that the war between France and England had gone on for too long and that he should seek out the respective kings to persuade them to cease the hostilities and establish lasting peace. Robert did as he had been told, and approached the King of France at Abbeville. Speaking 'softly and wisely', says Froissart, Robert was able to convince the King that his vision was the result of 'divine inspiration', and that God through Robert had expressed his will.⁵⁵³ However, present at the French court were not only the noblemen of France. Also the English lords John of Gaunt, the Count of Salisbury, Sir Thomas Percy, Thomas of Gloucester, the Count of Arundel and the bishops of Lincoln and London were present, according to the author.⁵⁵⁴ Most of

⁵⁵¹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 184. 'Pour ce temps avoit en France ung chancellier sage et moult vaillant homme durement, qui s' appelloit messire Reignault de Corbie, et moult ymaginatif, et veoit du long et du large toutes les besoingnes de France comment elles porroient cheoir et venir, et disoit bien au roy et à ses oncles: "Messeigneurs, on doit entrer par le droit huys en la maison. Ce roy Richard d' Angleterre monstre que il ne veult à nous, ne au royaume de France, que toute amour, quant par cause de mariage il se veult aloyer."'

⁵⁵² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 189.

⁵⁵³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 193. 'Robert l' Ermite vint emmy eulx, et là encommencha à parler moult froidement et sagement et à remontrer toute l' aventure . . . et disoit et maintenoit en ses paroles que la vision qui luy estoit advenue, estoit inspiration divine, et que Dieu luy avoit transmis pour tant que c'estoit son plaisir que il fuist ainsi.'

⁵⁵⁴ This was due to the Anglo-French peace negotiations. Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 190.

these were inclined to believe that God had indeed showed his intentions through Robert, says Froissart, but Thomas of Gloucester and the Count of Arundel did not. However, a letter relating Robert's vision was sent to King Richard, who was greatly rejoiced by its content.⁵⁵⁵ Froissart later relates how Robert came to England to speak of his vision and met with Richard and John of Gaunt who rewarded him grandly on his departure.⁵⁵⁶ However, he also visited Thomas of Gloucester at Pleshey where he tried to persuade the Duke of the merits of peace. But according to Froissart, the duke was a hard man who 'loved war more than peace'. Gloucester was not readily moved, and Robert left without being able to persuade him.⁵⁵⁷ Still, Robert, in Froissart's account, is said to have pointed out the cruel fate he believed would befall those who opposed peace, and as we know Thomas of Gloucester did indeed meet with a cruel fate when he was murdered at Calais.

The 'oiseuses' - 'foolish' opinions of Thomas of Gloucester is related in a conversation the Duke is said to have had with one of his knights:

' . . . pour le présent, il'n y a point de roy en Angleterre, qui veuille, ne qui ayme, ne qui désire les armes, car, se il y estoit, il le remonstreroit . . . Et le pueple de ce pays qui désire la bataille à plus grant et riche de luy, se adventurroit hardiement pour la bonne et grasse despouille qu'il en esperroit avoir, ainsi que du temps passé nos gent ont eu du temps du roy de bonne mémoire

⁵⁵⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 193 - 94.

⁵⁵⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 202. ' A son département, le roy d'Angleterre, pour l'onneur et amour du roy de France qui par delà l'avoit envoyé, luy donna des grans dons et beaulx, et aussi firent le duc de Lancaster et le duc d'Iorch, le conte de Hostidonne et le conte de Saslebery et messire Thomas de Perssy, . . . '

⁵⁵⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 196 - 201. ' Adont il compta de mot à mot toute la vision qui advenue luy estoit, pour esmouvoir le cuer du duc de Glocestre à pitié et raison; mais certes ce duc avoit le courage dur et auster.' Froissart utilises several pages to relate Robert the Hermite's speech to Thomas of Gloucester.

mon père et mon frère le prince de Galles. . . se je povoie estre ouy et creu, je seroie le premier à renouveler les guerres et à recouvrer les tors fais, lesquels on nous a fais et fait encoires tous les jours par la simplesse et lâcheté de nous, et par especial de nostre chief le roy qui s'est alyé par mariage à son adversaire: ce n'est pas signe que il le veuille guerrier. Nennil, non, il a le cul trop pesant, il ne demande que le boire et le mengier, le dormir, le danser et l'espringuier: ce n'est point vie de gens d'armes qui vueillent acquérir honneur par armes et traveillier leur corps . . . Dont on verra temprement une grande rébellion en ce pays; car le poeuple commence jà à parler et à murmurer, disant que telles choses ils ne veulent plus souffrir, ne porter. Il donne à entendre . . . que il veult faire ung voiage en Yrlande et là employer ses gens d'armes et ses archiers, et jà y a-il esté et petit conquesté, car Yrlande n'est pas terre de conqueste, ne de proufit. . . .' Ainsi se devoit le duc de Glocestre à son chevallier de telles oiseuses paroles et d'autres plus grandes, ainsi que depuis fut bien sceu.⁵⁵⁸

If we see the speech above in connection to the numerous negative evaluations of Gloucester and his actions in the account, I find it unlikely that the opinions voiced above about Richard's lack of martial skills were opinions that Froissart himself held of King Richard.⁵⁵⁹ However, the speech provides insight into the feelings of the

⁵⁵⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 3 - 5.

⁵⁵⁹ Richard's lack of martial skills was an often-voiced accusation. See for instance Walsingham, T.: *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley. 2 vols. London 1863-64, p. 156. Walsingham here states that Richard's knights were 'knights of Venus rather than knights of Bellona, more valiant in the bedchamber than on the field'. 'These fellows, who are in close association with the King, care nothing for what a knight ought to know - I am speaking not only about the use of arms but also about those matters which a noble king should be concerned in times of peace, such as hunting and hawking and the like - activities that serve to enhance the honour of a king.'

harshest of Richard's critics, including Gloucester's allies, the Londoners.⁵⁶⁰ In this manner Froissart is able to make an important and informative observation; namely that it was a common held opinion that continental war was the only war that mattered to many of the English noblemen.

As we have seen in Froissart's descriptions of war in the previous chapter, where he describes the great spoils made by Edward III and his army, there can be no doubt that he too knew that the warfare on the European mainland had been a source of enrichment for both noblemen and townsmen alike.⁵⁶¹ When Richard refused to state his continental claims and choose instead to wage war in Ireland, many believed that Richard had not only removed the possibility of material gain from the English noblemen, but also the possibility for the English to prove themselves on an international arena in order to augment their symbolic capital. According to Thomas of Gloucester there was 'neither honour nor profit' to be found in Ireland, a view somewhat supported by Froissart's own account of the primitive state of Ireland and how the Irish kings submitted to Richard 'par amour et douceur', rather than by giving battle.⁵⁶² From what we can gather however, this was not something that detracted from Richard's honour in Froissart's opinion. 'The cost of the Irish

⁵⁶⁰ When discussing matters in England with Sir Jean de Grailly, Grailly said this about Gloucester: 'Ce Thomas de Glocestre est d'une très - merveilleuse teste, et est orgueilleux et présomptueux et de très-perilleuse manière, mais, quoy que il face, ne die, il est tousjours advoué de la communauté d'Angleterre et en est très grandement bien amé. Et tousjours s'enclinent à luy et il à euls.' Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 154.

⁵⁶¹ Froissart's account is supported by for instance the account of Thomas Walsingham in which he says that there were few women who did not possess something from Caen, Calais, or other overseas towns, such as clothes, furs, or cushions. See Walsingham, T.: *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley. 2 vols. London 1863 - 64.: 'Tablecloths and linen were seen in everyone's houses. Married women were decked in the trimmings of French matrons, and if the latter sorrowed over their loss, the former rejoiced their gain'.

⁵⁶² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 168 - 170. 'Lors commença Henry Cristède, et dist en telle manière: " . . . Verité est que quatre roys d'Yrlande des plus puissans qui y sont selon la fourme du pays, sont venus à obéissance au roy Richart d' Angleterre par amour et douceur, non par bataille, ne par contrainte. . . "'

campaign had been willingly born by the English realm who saw that their money had been well spent when Richard returned with honour from this campaign', the 'good and prudent' knight, Henry Crystede,⁵⁶³ is reported to have said to the chronicler.⁵⁶⁴ However, the author's statement that Richard 'employed none but gentry and archers in the war',⁵⁶⁵ indicates that he was aware that the Irish campaigns presented few possibilities for gain for the greater magnates.

Richard's inability to uphold internal peace and justice, however, seems to be a vital point in Froissart's *critique*, expressed by Gaunt's accusation that Richard was destroying his kingdom by putting 'trouble and hate between the noblemen and the good towns'. Kingdoms who are internally divided, says Gaunt, will always be desolate and destroyed, an opinion Froissart expresses several times throughout his chronicles, especially in Book II where he relates the Peasants' revolt and the uprisings in Flanders.⁵⁶⁶ The unrest, in Froissart's description, was primarily caused by the opinion of some of the burghers that they could have a better life without the nobles.⁵⁶⁷ To this effect, the people of Ghent killed the Earl of Flanders' bailiff, an

⁵⁶³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 181. Henry Crystede is initially described as 'moult homme de bien et de prudence pourveu et assés bien parlant la langue de France' and later as 'bien courtois et gracieux.'

⁵⁶⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. pp. 168 - 69. 'Lors commença Henry Cristède, et dist en telle manière: "Il n'est point en mémoire que oncques roy d' Angleterre, pour aler en Yrland et faire guerre aux Yrlandois, eüst si grant appareil de gens d'armes et d'archiers, comme le roy a eu celle saison et tenu plus de noeuf mois sur la frontière d'Yrlande et à grant coustages, et tout ces despens a payé trop volentiers son pays, et tiennent tout à bien employé les marchans des cités et des bonnes villes d' Angleterre ce qu'ils y ont mis, quant ils voient que le roy est à son honneur retourné de ce voyage . . .'

⁵⁶⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XV. p. 169. ' . . . et n' a fait sa guerre fors de gentils hommes et d'archiers.'

⁵⁶⁶ SHF Livre II. Tome X. § 212. 'Che fu une mervilleuse cose et de povre fondacion, dont ceste pestillensse commença en Engletière; et pour donner exemple à toutes manières de bonnes gens, j'en parlerai et le remonstrerai selonc ce que dou fait et de le incidensse j' en fui adont infourmés.'

⁵⁶⁷ This according to Froissart was also the cause of the Peasant's revolt and he relates how the rebel-leader, John Ball, incited the men to action in a speech: "Bonnes gens, les choses ne poent

event deeply regretted by the 'good men, sage and rich' of the town, who understood how ungracious people had brought their town into peril and destruction, says Froissart.⁵⁶⁸ Although the Count of Flanders is not a man consistently shown in a positive light in the *Chroniques*,⁵⁶⁹ Froissart describes how the Count in a meeting with the men of Ghent was able to appease them. 'The Count began to speak sagaciously,' says Froissart, 'showing them from point to point the love and affection he had for them'. Demonstrating how a prince and lord ought to be loved, feared, served and honoured, the Count was able to persuade at least the 'wise' men of the town that they had behaved wrongly, says Froissart, who seems to be of the opinion that a good lord was he who was able to establish a climate where burghers and noblemen could relate in a peaceful and orderly manner.⁵⁷⁰ Like

bien aler en Engletière ne iron jusques à tant que li bien iron tout de commun et que il ne sera ne villains ne gentils homs, que nous ne soions tout ouni. A quoi faire sont cil, que nous nommons signeur, plus grant maistre de nous? . . . Il ont les vins, les espisses et les bons pains, et nous avons le soille, le retrait et le paille, et buvons l'aige. Ils ont le sejour et les biaux manoirs, et nous avons le paine et le travail, et le pleue et le vent as camps, et faut que de nous viengne et de nostre labour ce dont il tiennet les estas. Nous sommes appelé serf et batu, se nous ne faisons presentement leur service . . . " SHF Livre II. Tome X. § 212. In *Tableau de la littérature française*, Jean Giono writes 'Il (Froissart) ne voit ni le peuple ni le bourgeois. Pour fair partie de son univers et donc de son histoire, il faut être au moins comte', a statement which is clearly not correct. Giono, Jean: *Tableau de la littérature française*. Paris 1962. pp. 138 - 39.

⁵⁶⁸ SHF Livre II. Tome IX. § 111. 'Li bonnes gens de Gaind, li riche homme et li notable, qui avoient là dedens leurs femmes et leurs enffans et leurs marcheandisses, leurs hiretages ens et hors, et qui avoient appris à vivre honnerablement et sans dangier, n'estoient mies bien aisse de ce que il veoient les coses en che partie, et se sentoient trop grandement fourfait enviers leur signeur. Si regardèrent entre iaulx que il i convenoit pourveïr de remède et amender che fourfait ores ou autre fois, et euls mettre en le merchi dou conte; si valoit mieux tempre que tart.'

⁵⁶⁹ SHF Livre II. Tome IX. § 129. The author relates how the count had contributed to his own troubles by being greedy 'in the same manner as various lords are likely inclined to seek profit, and not think of the consequences, for covetousness deceives them'. The Earl was also persuaded to take sides in an internal conflict between two families in Ghent, and John Lyon, who lost his office due to this quarrel, would later become the leader of the White Hats. We should note that Froissart has no problems with describing the Earl's more negative traits, but apparently this did not alter his general perception of the situation. The Earl, despite his foolishness and greed, was the lawful lord of the realm and should be obeyed and respected.

⁵⁷⁰ SHF Livre II. Tome IX. § 129. 'La commencha li contes à parler moult sagement. Tout se teurent, quant il parla. Là leur remonstra il de point en point l'amour et l' affection que il avoit à iaulx, avant que il l'eussent corouchié; là leur remonstra il comment uns sires devoit estre amé, cremus, servis et honnerés de ses gens; là remonstra il comment ils les avoit tenus, gardés et

Richard II at Smithfield, the Count was able to show courage and 'sound judgement' when faced with his subjects. However, in Froissart's account, the Count also showed clemency and willingness to forgive, provided that his people, in the future, would behave better.

The ideal relationship between a king and his subjects is to be one of love, writes Henri de Gauchi (after Gilles de Rome): 'Li rois et li prince . . . se doivent fere amer de lor pueple', moreover, they should seek to inspire love, rather than induce fear in their subjects.⁵⁷¹ Gilles de Rome's work *De Regimine Principum*, written in the 1270's enjoyed wide circulation in later medieval Europe and Richard's tutor, Sir Simon Burley, is known to have owned a copy.⁵⁷² A similar view is also expressed by Froissart's contemporary, Christine de Pizan, in her *Book of the Body Politic* where she argues that every member of the body plays a different role and should fulfil the function assigned peacefully.⁵⁷³ Harmony between the members of the body, 'les

deffendus contre tout homme; . . . Là leur remonstroit il plusieurs pöins raisonnables que li sage concevoient, et entendoient bien clerement que de tout il dissoit verité. Plusieurs l'ooient volontiers, et li aucun non, qui ne demandoient que l'enredie. Quant il eut là esté une heure et plus, et qu' il leur ost remonstrées toutes ses intencions bellement et douchement, en le fin il dist que il voloit demorer leurs bons sires en le fourme et manière que il avoit esté par devant, et leur pardonnoit rancunes, haïnnes et mautalens que il avoit eu à iaulx et aussi malefisches fais, ne plus n'en volloit öir nouvelles, et les voloit tenir en droit et en signourie, enssi que tousjours avoit fait; mais leur prioit que riens ne fesissent de nouviel et que cil blanc cappron fuissent mis jus.'

⁵⁷¹ See reference in Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 175. Aegedius Romanus ("Gilles de Rome"): *Li Livres du gouvernement des rois, version franCaise du traité . . . De regimine principum rédigée vers la find du XIIIe siècle par Henri de Gauchi*. Ed. S.P. Molenaer. London 1899. p. 368.

⁵⁷² Jones, R.H.: *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages*. Oxford 1968. p. 161.

⁵⁷³ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. de Pizan's book takes its name and organizing theme from John of Salisbury's twelfth-century work, *Policraticus*, in which the political community is described as a body with the king as its head, soldiers and administrative officers as the hands, and the peasants as the feet. While John of Salisbury attributes this well-known metaphor to a letter from Plutarch to his pupil Trajan, most contemporary scholars see this as a polite fiction, and believe the use of the image to be John's own. The human body was later used by several other authors to express

princes, la chevalerie et le people', was perceived as the condition necessary for its survival. The good king, according to de Pizan, is he who 'guards his sheep from wolves and evil beasts, and keeps them clean and healthy so that they can increase and be fruitful and yield their fleece whole'.⁵⁷⁴ Froissart makes a similar point about the lord's role in relation to his subjects when he says that the Count of Flanders demonstrated to the people of Ghent how he had 'kept and defended them against all men, and how he had kept them in peace, profit and prosperity'.⁵⁷⁵

Richard, in Froissart's account, was not able to assume the role as the keeper and defender of his people, but is accused of not upholding justice and peace in his realm on several occasions. As a result, honest men seeking 'paix, amour et simplesse', and to pay their dues, were prevented from doing so, says Froissart,⁵⁷⁶ and did not know to whom to turn for protection or justice.⁵⁷⁷ This was clearly failing one of his foremost duties, according to the author, who explores the subject of the king as guardian and defender of his people, even against the oppression of his own vassals, in his account of a visit the young King of France, Charles VI, made to the south of France.⁵⁷⁸

interdependence, hierarchy and duty, depending on the author's political views. See Struve, Tilman: *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart 1978.

⁵⁷⁴ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. p. 16.

⁵⁷⁵ SHF Livre II. Tome IX. § 129. ' . . . là leur remonstra il comment il les avoit tenus en paix en en pourfit et en toutes prosperités. Depuis que il estoit venus à tière, ouviers les passages de mer qui leur estoient clos en son jone avent . . . '

⁵⁷⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 156. See above, note 491. p. 154.

⁵⁷⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 156. See above, note 492. p. 155.

⁵⁷⁸ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV*. Livre IV. § 4. p. 372.

Having visited Burgundy and Pope Clement at Avignon, King Charles is reported to have passed through his domains in Languedoc. This region, according to the chronicler, had been harshly exploited in the past by Charles's uncles, the Dukes of Anjou and Berry.⁵⁷⁹ The object of the King's visit, says Froissart, was to investigate the complaints of extortion that had been brought to him.⁵⁸⁰ In Montpellier the King and his councillors discussed the affairs of the town in detail, says Froissart, who stresses that this 'revision' was the main aim of the King's visit.⁵⁸¹

In the account of Charles's visitation, the inhabitants from the town and the surrounding countryside are described to have awaited their king eagerly in order to lay complaints before him against an official of the Duke of Berry called Betisac. According to Froissart, Betisac had stripped the surrounding districts of everything he had been able to lay his hands on,⁵⁸² and complaints, which spoke loudly of Betisac's scandalous administration and of the impositions and extortion he had inflicted on the people, had been brought to the King in the form of petitions.⁵⁸³ At Béziers, Betisac, who had been in the King's company since he left Avignon, was summoned to explain himself. Simultaneously, examiners went to Betisac's house and took possession of all the documents and accounts relating to his dealings in

⁵⁷⁹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 4. pp. 379 – 80.*

⁵⁸⁰ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 4. p. 381.* 'Don't le roy complaindoit bien les hommes et bonnes gens qui avoient eu si grant dommaige, et disoit leur promettoit que il y pourveroit et refourmeroit tout le paÿs en bon estat.'

⁵⁸¹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 4. p. 382.* 'A ces parolles respondoit le roy et disoit: " Se Dieux m'aït à l'ame, je y entenderay volentiers et y pourveray avant mon retour et pugniray les mauvais, car je feray faire inquisition sur les offices de mes oncles qui ont ou tamps passé gouverné les parties de la Languedoch et seront corrigiés ceulx qui l'aront desservy" . . . '

⁵⁸² *Chroniques Livre III et IV. Livre IV. § 6. pp. 398 – 99.*

⁵⁸³ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 7. p. 400.* 'Lors luy furent moustrees une grant quantité de letters et de complaintes, lesquelles avoient esté apportees à Besiers et donnees au roy par maniere de supplications, qui tout parloient et chantoient du fol gouvernement ce Bethisach et des oppressions et extorsion que il avoit fait au peuple.'

the past, says Froissart who is thereby showing that the trial against Betisac was thoroughly prepared by the King's men.⁵⁸⁴ The next passages in Froissart's text relate the examiners findings and Betisac's subsequent trial and execution. However, Froissart more than hints at the fact that Betisac had performed his extortions in agreement with his master, the Duke of Berry.⁵⁸⁵

Charles VI is not a king consistently praised by Froissart, and he should later fall ill and suffer from what the author describes as 'frénesie'.⁵⁸⁶ However, at this particular point Froissart's portrayal of the King is favourable and he is shown to have been able to remove several injustices by which the inhabitants of the South had been oppressed. A good king, in Froissart's opinion, seems to have been an authority to which his lesser subjects could turn in order to get help and justice, even when oppressed and exploited by noblemen and magnates. However, in Froissart's account, Charles is not portrayed as possessing the distant regality Richard has so often been accused of.⁵⁸⁷ On the contrary, Froissart places strong emphasis on the

⁵⁸⁴ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 7. pp. 400 – 01.* 'Sy tost comme il (Bethisac) fu emprissonnez, les inquisiteurs allerent à son hostel et saisirent tous les escrips et comtes don't du tamps passé il s'estoit ensonniés et les emporterent avec eulx et les visiterent par loisir et trouverent ens moult de diverses choses et grans sommes de finances, lesquelles il avoit eues et levees du tamps passé ens es seneschaulchees et seignouries du roy dessus nommees, et les nombres si grans que les seigneurs en oant lire en estoient tous esmerveilliés.'

⁵⁸⁵ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 7. pp. 401 – 10.*

⁵⁸⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart. Tome XV. p. 39.* On the nature of the King's illness Froissart says: 'Dieu, souverain sire des cieulx et de la terre et formeur de toutes chose, l'apareille tel que il (Charles) perdy sens et règne, et fut sept ans en tel estat que il vivoit de glans et de pommes sauvages, et avoit le goust et l'appétit d'un pourcel et quant il ot fait celle pénitance, Dieu luy rendi sa mémoire . . . A parler par raison et esclairchir vérité, Dieu le Père, Dieu le Fils, Dieu le Saint-Esperit . . . fut, est et sera tousjours aussi puissant pour monstrier ses oeuvres comme il fu oncques, ne on ne se doit esmerveiller, ne esbahir de chose que il fache . . . '

⁵⁸⁷ Richard II is usually cast as a man out of touch with the ideals and values of his own time, in the sense that he is said to have tried to distance himself from a more feudal concept of kingship. Richard sought to project an elevated concept of the Crown and for instance began to require new forms of address, says Nigel Saul in his book *Richard II. Parliamentary petitions started to address him as 'very excellent, redoubtable and powerful prince' and refer to his 'highness and royal majesty'. See Saul, Nigel: Richard II. Yale 1997. pp. 248 - 252. Richard gave a*

'courtoisie' and chivalry of the young monarch when he, in the same part of his account, shows Charles agreeing to organize a pan-European tournament at St. Inglevert. According to Froissart, this decision was against the advice of some of his older counsellors who were unwilling to meet the English in friendly contest. Charles, however, who was greatly rejoiced by the proposition of some of his knights,⁵⁸⁸ is said to have wanted to get to know the English better and have 'the honour of their company', a remark which points to the supra-nationality of chivalrous society, but also maybe to a change in attitudes.⁵⁸⁹ While the older generation wanted war, the two young monarchs are described to have been keen to establish peaceful relations. Froissart later shows the tournament being a great success.⁵⁹⁰

Froissart also describes the young, joyous French monarch dancing all night with the 'lively ladies of Montpellier', giving gifts like gold rings and clasps 'to each according to his estimation of her worth'. The author's tone is slightly humorous, but the account supports the impression that Charles was a polite and courteous King, possessing ample amounts of personal charisma.⁵⁹¹ After having taken 'affectionate

new directness, perhaps a new form to the older medieval notions of the royal prerogative', says V. H. Galbraith. 'His reign is the link between medieval ideas and the later doctrine of the divine rights of kings'. See Galbraith, V.H.: 'A New Life of Richard II', *History*, March 1942. Richard H. Barber also emphasises the distance between Richard and his men when he says that Richard II, with his highly developed aesthetic sense and love of refinement could not share his interests with his barons and courtiers; and on his barons his power ultimately rested. See Barber, R. H.: *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*. New York 1978. p. 238.

⁵⁸⁸ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 6. p. 397.* 'De la haulte emprise et courrageuse de .iij. chevalliers fu le roy de France moult resjois.'

⁵⁸⁹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 6. pp. 396 – 97.* ' "Et prions à tous les nobles chevalliers et escuiers estranges qui venir y vouldront que point ne voellent penser ne ymaginer que nous fachons ceste chose par orgueil, hayne ne malvoeuillance, mais que pour les veoir et avoir leur honorable compaignie et acointance, laquelle de tous noz coers entierement nous desirons." '

⁵⁹⁰ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 12. pp. 444 - 55.*

⁵⁹¹ *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 4. pp. 382 - 83.* 'Le roy de France se tint en la ville de Montpellier plus de .xj.jours, car l'ordonnance de la ville des dames, des demoiselles et leur

leave' of the feisty ladies of Montpellier, says Froissart, Charles continued his visitation of the South and came to Béziers where he received an equally enthusiastic welcome and spent three days in 'revels and parties with the ladies of the town'.⁵⁹² In spite of the emphasis Froissart puts on the monarch's role as the guardian of peace and justice, Charles is also portrayed as the centre-point of public affection.

Richard, however, never managed to gain the affections of his lesser subjects, and especially strained, according to Froissart, was his relationship with the Londoners. However, from what we can gather from Froissart's account, this may have been an insurmountable task. Already during the Peasant's Revolt, the author relates how several of the Londoners supported the uprisings.⁵⁹³ Later, the author describes them as 'the most dangerous common people in the world, the most violent and presumptuous',⁵⁹⁴ able to establish an armed force of more than twenty-four thousand men at arms and more than thirty thousand archers, a force to be reckoned with.⁵⁹⁵ This they could because they were so extra-ordinarily rich. 'The citizens of

estas et leurs esbatemens que il y trouvoit et veoit, et ses gens aussi, luy plaisoient grandement bien. Le roy, au voir dire, estoit là à sa nourechon, car pour ce tamps il estoit joennes et de legier esprit, si dansoit et carolloit avec ces frisches dames de Montpellier toute la nuit et leur donnoit joiaux, anelés d'or et de fremailles à chacune selon ce que il veoit et concepvoit qu'elle valloit, et faisoit bancqués et souppers grans et biaux et bien estoffez.'

⁵⁹² *Chroniques. Livres III et IV. Livre IV. § 7. p. 402.* 'Trois jours après se tint le roy à Besiers en joye et en revel avec les dames et damoiselles. . . '

⁵⁹³ *Chroniques. Livres I et II. Livre II. § 49.* 'Lors fist le maire de Londres et plusieurs riches bourgeois fermer la porte du pont de la Thamise, mais les menus gens de la ville, . . . , estoient de leur secte.'

⁵⁹⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart. Tome XVI. p. 190.* '[Les Londriens] est le plus périlleus poeuple commun qui soit au monde et le plus oultrageux et orgueilleux.' See also Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart. Tome XVI. p. 160-161.*

⁵⁹⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart. Tome XVI. pp. 190-91.* 'Et de tous ceulx d'Angleterre Londriens son chiefs, et au voir dire ils sont moult puissans de mises et de gens, car ils se trouvoient bien du clos de Londres vingt et quatre mil hommes armés de piet en cape de toutes pièces, et bien trente mil archiers; c' est grant force, car ils sont fors, durs, hardis et hausters et tant plus voient de sang espandu, tant sont-ils plus cruels et moins esbahis.'

London, who are rich and powerful', says Froissart, 'draw their living chiefly from merchandise sent over land and sea which enables them to live in great prosperity'.⁵⁹⁶ The Londoners are also described as Gloucester's foremost supporters and central in acts like the trial and beheading of Sir Simon Burley.⁵⁹⁷ In Froissart's opinion, the Londoners were the real leaders of the kingdom, without whom the rest of the country would 'neither dare nor be able to do anything',⁵⁹⁸ and as we have seen above, it is the Londoners who are portrayed as the driving – force behind the events that led to Richard's downfall.

According to Froissart, Henry (unlike Richard) was greatly loved by the Londoners who are described to have lined the streets when Henry left England for France after his banishment. At first view, this may seem as a good example of a lord loved by his people. However, in view of the author's many negative evaluations of the Londoners, I believe that the relationship the author here describes between Henry and the Londoners cannot be compared to the role Charles played in relation to his subjects in Southern France. In fact, Froissart may have felt far more apprehensive about the relationship between Henry and the Londoners than what is explicitly stated in his account. If we also take into account that the connection between Henry and the Londoners, in reality, may not have been so strong as Froissart argues,⁵⁹⁹ his description becomes even more puzzling. Why would the chronicler portray Henry

⁵⁹⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 158. 'Les citoyens de Londres qui sont riches et puissans et qui vivent le plus des marchandises qui courent par mer et par terre, et ont aprins à tenir grans estas su ce . . .'

⁵⁹⁷ SHF Livre III. Tome XIV. § 188.

⁵⁹⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 158. '. . . et par lesquels (les citoyens de Londres) tout le royaume d' Angleterre se ordonne et gouverne (ne tout le demourant du pays ne pourroient, ne ouseroient faire autant comme ils font) . . .'

⁵⁹⁹ See Caroline M Barron: 'Richard II and London' in *Richard II. The Art of Kingship*. Eds. A. Goodman and James L. Gillespie; and 'The Deposition of Richard II' in *Politics and Crisis*. pp. 132 - 49.

as the instrument of the Londoners if Henry, in fact, were the ambitious and scheming leader of the disaffected nobility seeking revenge? The question is difficult to answer, and it could of course be that Froissart actually believed that Henry acted under the influence and protection of this most 'périlleus poeuple commun qui soit au monde et le plus outrageux et orgueilleux.' But are we sure that Froissart perceived Henry's reliance on the support of the Londoners as entirely positive? In my opinion the answer is 'no', an opinion I find supported by some of the events related in the account.

The Earl of Derby, who in Paris is portrayed as reluctant to overthrow his cousin, is described to have promised to act in accordance with the will of the Londoners almost immediately after his arrival in England.⁶⁰⁰ Subsequently, every decision in connection to the capture of Richard is said to have been in accordance with the will of the Londoners, with the exception of the decision to approach the castle of Flint with only a few men.⁶⁰¹ At Flint Henry persuaded Richard by 'doulces paroles' and promised to defend his cousin and plead his cause.⁶⁰² This is a promise Henry is described to have renewed on several occasions in the account. Still, as we know, it is a promise that Henry may not have kept.

⁶⁰⁰ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 175. 'Et jà avoient les Londriens traittié devers le conte d' Erby que il seroit leur seigneur et roy et se ordonneroit de tous poins par leur conseil, et, à ceste ordonnance et aliance faire, le conte d' Erby mist en termes que il emprendroit le fais et la gouverne du royaulme à demourer perpétuellement à tousjours à luy et à son hoir.'

⁶⁰¹ A descision Froissart explicitly says Henry took on his own. See Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 181. 'Le conte d'Erby s'arresta . . . et ot conseil de soy-meismes et non d'autry.'

⁶⁰² Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 181. ' . . . il feroit tant par traittié, se il povoit, que il entreroit dedens par amour et non par force, et metteroit hors le roy par doulces paroles et l'asseureroit de tout périls fors de venir à Londres, et encoires luy auroit-il en convenant que de sa personne il n'auroit quelque mal et seroit pour luy moyen envers les Londriens qui trop fort estoient courrouchiés sur luy, comme bien le monstrèrent depuis.'

In the speech attributed to Henry after his cousin humbly had given up his Crown, (first part related above), Henry accused Richard of relying too heavily on evil counsellors, an opinion Froissart probably shared. However, I am not convinced that he shared the viewpoints related in the subsequent part of the speech:

. . . le duc de Lancastre entendy ceste parole, si respondi et dist: ". . . commune renommée court parmy Angleterre et ailleurs que vous ne fustes oncques fils au prince de Galles, mais d'un clerc ou d' un chanoine . . . Et telle est la renommée de ceulx de ce royaume et bien en avés par expérience monstrés les euvres, car vous avés tousjors esté encliné à la plaisance de François et à vouloir traittier avecques eulx paix à la confusion et grant déshonneur du royaume d' Angleterre. Et pour tant que mon oncle de Glocestre et le conte d'Arundel le vous remonstroient bien sagement et loyalment et vouloient garder l'onneur de ce pays et à leur pouvoir enssieuvir les oeuvres vertueuses de leurs pères, les avés-vous trahiteusement fait mourir.

As we may see, the Duke accused Richard of being Joan of Kent's illegitimate son, of favouring the French and of the murder of his uncle of Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel. These, says Henry, were men who had guided the young king 'wisely and loyally' to preserve the honour of the country and the achievements of their fathers. This is an opinion I find in opposition to Froissart's consistent negative portrayal of Gloucester and his warmongering. 'Recognising that there was no use in arguing his case', says Froissart, Richard made himself as humble as he could and pleaded with Henry to save his life.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰³ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 201. 'Le roy Richart entendoit et considéroit bien toutes les paroles que le duc de Lancastre luy remonstroit, et ne sçavoit que

In Froissart's narrative, the news of the deposition of Richard was not received with joy in other parts of Europe. The Count of Salisbury, he says, had brought the news to France⁶⁰⁴ and according to the author, the King of France who had previously taken such a liking to Henry, was so distraught by the news that he suffered from another bout of 'frénaisie', while the dismayed Duke of Bourgogne is said to have predicted Richard's death. According to the Duke of Bourgogne, Henry's alliance and obligations to the Londoners were such that he would do what they wanted 'whether he wanted or not',⁶⁰⁵ a comment which, in my opinion, supports the impression that Froissart may have looked more negatively on the relationship between Henry and the Londoners than what seems to be the case at first glance. However, in Froissart's description, the Duke of Bourgogne was not blaming Henry directly, but pointed to the detrimental effect of the past actions of Thomas of Gloucester.⁶⁰⁶

According to Froissart, Richard imprisonment in the Tower and the killing of the men of his council was also highly lamented in Gascony, not only because he had

dire, ne que respondre; car très-bien veoit que force et argumens ne luy pouvoient en riens prouffiter mais très bien doulcour, amour et simplese, et se humilioit tout ce qu'il pouvoit et prioit tousjours au du de Lancastre que sa vie luy fusit saulvée.'

⁶⁰⁴ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 209. '... et avoit ledit conte porté et tesmoigné que le roy Henry estoit fauls, mauvais et traittre, et que ce pechié et malfait ne faisoit point à pardonner, mais demandoit pugnition très – crueuse.' On his return to England, Henry incarcerated Salisbury, but pardoned him, when Richard's half-brother, John Holland, intervened on his part. Holland, on his side, had been persuaded to seek out Henry's patronage by his wife, says Froissart. See Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 210.

⁶⁰⁵ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 212. 'Et dist le duc de Bourgoigne: "... Puisque ils ont prins leur roy et mis en prison, ils le feront mourir, car oncques ne l'àmerent. Et pour tant que il ne vouloit point de guerre, mais toute paix, si couronneront à roy Henry, duc de Lancastre, qui se aloyera et très grandement obligera à eulx, et fera, vueille ou non, ce qu'ils vouldront."'

⁶⁰⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 212. 'Et dist le duc de Borgoigne: "... et tout ce meschief vient et est engendré par le duc de Gloucestre. . .'

been born and elevated amongst them, but also 'because he had always acted lovingly towards them, heeded their requests and received them well'.⁶⁰⁷ The Bordelais who believed Richard to be 'le plus preud'homme' of his country was in fact so angered by Richard's dethronement that they threatened to turn themselves over to the King of France. Their seneschal, 'a young valiant English knight', sat down their grievances in a letter that was brought to London. Here, according to the author, the King took council with the Londoners who took it upon them to write a reply, 'because they were addressed to the King and the Londoners,' a comment underlining the powerful position of the Londoners.⁶⁰⁸ It may also be that Froissart did not want Henry to be associated with the content of the reply where the weak position of the cities of Gascony was pointed out in a rather disrespectful manner.⁶⁰⁹ The Londoners also informed the Bordelais that they would send Sir Thomas Percy to replace the seneschal, a decision, which in principle cannot have been theirs to make. This passage, I believe, supports the impression that Froissart may have felt that Henry had become too dependent on the support of these mighty burghers. The cities of Gascony did not, in fact, turn their back on the English. The cause however, as Froissart relates it, was not that they approved of Henry's actions, but that the Londoners had been right when they pointed out that the Gascons would not be able

⁶⁰⁷ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 213. '(Ils) . . . furent moult mérancolieux, et par especial ceulx de la cité de Bourdeaulx, car le roy Richart avoit esté nés et nourry entre eulx: si l'aimoient bien, et, quant les Bourdelois venoient devers luy, il les recevoit lyement et doucement, et s'enclinoit à eulx faire toutes les requestes.'

⁶⁰⁸ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. p. 214. 'Pour ce jour y estoit le roy Henry, et avoit parlement aux Londriens, lesquels par accord prindrent ces lettres, car elles généralement s'adresoient au roy et aux Londriens. Si furent ouvertes et leutes, et sur ce le roy et les Londriens orent conseil, . . . je vous diray quel chose les Londriens en respondirent, comme ceulx qui gaires ne furent esbahis des nouvelles dessus dites.'

⁶⁰⁹ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 214 - 5. 'Et dirent, les lettres oyes et entendues: Ce ne sera jà que ceulx de Bourdeaulx, de Bayonne et de Dax se tourneront Francois, car il ne sçauront vivre en leurs dangiers, ne ils ne pourroient souffrir leurs ruses. Ils sont et demeurent franchement et aisiément delés nous et avec nous. Et, se les Francois les dominoient, ils seroient tailliés et retailliés deux ou trois fois l'an, laquelle chose ils n' ont pas accoustumé . . .'

to accept the heavy taxes they would have to pay if they turned French. Pragmatism, as we may see, clearly marked the *bourgeois* in Froissart's account.

But is the author in fact also hinting at a pragmatic decision made by Henry when he relates how Richard died, only days after Henry's knights and the Londoners had pleaded with the new King to kill his defeated cousin? I believe the answer must be 'yes'. I also believe that Froissart did not approve of the solution, but, nevertheless, found it difficult to write an account directly accusing Henry IV of England of the murder. Whether the author himself was motivated by pragmatic concern when he wrote his narrative is unknown. Froissart could have written to placate present or potential patrons or he could have believed that the events had unfolded as he describes. However, although clearly searching for 'the moral truth behind the events he writes about,'⁶¹⁰ it remains that the author's own opinions and moral judgements about the events at times seem difficult to discern at this point of his account.

In his book on Froissart, Peter Ainsworth says that the Rome manuscript of Book I, undertaken around the same time as Froissart was finishing Book IV, is marked by a shift in ethos towards a greater cynicism or pragmatism. 'More and more frequently, in this redaction, we hear the accents of a discreet irony on the chronicler's part, drawing our attention to the gap opening up between the smooth appearances and cynical or at least pragmatic motives, or even between two alternative events.'⁶¹¹ Without having studied the Rome manuscript, I would argue that the gap between smooth appearances and pragmatic motives is also apparent in Froissart's Book IV and that the account is marked by the presence of a 'sous-texte' - opinions and

⁶¹⁰ Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 306.

⁶¹¹ Ainsworth, Peter F.: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 264.

messages embedded in the narrative without being explicitly stated. Whether Froissart was ironic, weary or plainly afraid to state his opinions more openly is difficult to say.

The purpose of the knight is to defend his lord, not the people, says Raymond Lulle in *le Livre de l'Ordre de la Chevalerie*.⁶¹² 'All subjects ought . . . to be loyal towards their prince, and evil comes from doing the opposite' says Christine de Pizan.⁶¹³ 'If there is a case sometime when the common people seem to be aggrieved by some burden, the merchants ought to . . . go before the prince or the council, and bring their claims for them in humility . . .'⁶¹⁴ The noble knight on his side 'ought to bring back the common people or others who from fear or dread or evil want to rebel and take the wrong side . . .'⁶¹⁵ says de Pizan. Froissart may not have shared the views stated by Lulle or de Pizan, or his opinions may have been more eclectic and nuanced. In the description of Enrique of Trastamara's fight for the throne of Castile, the author clearly seems to favour the illegitimate, but valiant, Enrique's claim to the throne of Castile over his cruel adversary King Pedro. However, in my opinion, it is by no means certain that Froissart perceived Richard to be as unworthy of ruling as Pedro. I also believe that the ideal king, as he can be synthesized from the pages of Froissart's *Chroniques*, was not Henry IV, an opinion I believe is supported by the author's last comment on the events relating to the downfall of Richard II:

⁶¹² Lulle, Raymond: *Le Livre de l'Ordre de la Chevalerie*. Ed. Guy Trédaniel. Introduction, traduction et notes par Bruno Hapel. Paris 1990. p. 28.

⁶¹³ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. p. 94.

⁶¹⁴ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. pp. 99 - 100.

⁶¹⁵ de Pizan, Christine: *The Book of the Body Politic*. ed. and trans. K. L. Forhan. Cambridge 1994. p. 17.

Or dis-je Jehan Froissart dessus nommé, acteur de ceste histoire, ainsi en considerant toutes ces choses, . . . Ce fut quant le roy Henry par les conditions dessusdittes fut couronné roy d'Angleterre, et point ne pensoit à la couronne, ne jamais n'eüst pensé, se Richart de Bourdeaulx se fuist porté familièrement et amiablement devers luy. Et encoires le firent les Londriens roy pour eschever les grans dommages de luy et de ses enffans, dont les Londriens orent pitié.⁶¹⁶

There can be no doubt that Froissart believed Henry to have been wronged by Richard. However, when summing up the reasons why Henry became king, the author does not point out Henry's superior valour, better claim to the throne or his charismatic leadership, but to the fact that Henry had been made king 'out of the pity of the Londoners', the men the author states were the fiercest and most outrageous common people of the world. The message is thus, mixed, and supports the view that Froissart may have felt more than a little conflicted. I also believe that the statement, when presented to Froissart's contemporary aristocratic audience on the Continent, contributed little to Henry's symbolic capital.

Henry should indeed meet with many problems shortly after his ascending to the throne. Magnates engaged in local quarrels, parliament was critical of royal expenditure and in Gascony the situation of the English soon became critical.⁶¹⁷ In 1401, Philip Repingdon, a royal chaplain and the future bishop of Lincoln, wrote to Henry that his ' . . . joy [at Henry's entry into the realm of England] had changed to sorrow, while all evils multiply, and the hope of healing have gone out of the hearts

⁶¹⁶ Kervyn von Lettenhove. *Oeuvres de Froissart*. Tome XVI. pp. 235 - 36.

⁶¹⁷ Keen, Maurice: *England in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1973. pp. 306 - 07.

of men.'⁶¹⁸ By 1402, general discontent had fostered rueful reflections about the justification of the revolution of 1399, says Maurice Keen, and by 1403 Henry had been left by some of his foremost supporters like the Percies.⁶¹⁹ The commons in parliament also gave Henry ample amounts of trouble, and appointed treasurers of war to supervise the King's expenditure and auditors at the exchequer. 'This is a record of sustained action with a consistent objective, and one not flattering to the kings' dignity,' says Keen, who also points out that there was never, in the Middle Ages, so much plain speaking between the king and the commons as there was in Henry IV's reign.⁶²⁰ Although Henry's record as a ruler, in Keen's opinion, should not be undervalued, it is clear that no one regretted his days when they were over.

'It's the old story' says the former Monty Python member Terry Jones in the BBC-series *Medieval Lives*. 'Henry Bolingbroke was an illegal usurper who treacherously went against all his vows of loyalty as a chivalric knight, stole the throne from his cousin and then had him murdered.'⁶²¹ Although this may be an oversimplification it also shows how perspectives and opinions on historical events change as time passes. However, Jones's statement also make us wonder whether Froissart would have portrayed the events and the people who contributed to Richard's downfall differently if he had been able to undertake a new edition of Book IV before his death.

⁶¹⁸ The Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton. (R.S) vol.1. pp. 151 - 4. This note is from Keen, Maurice: *England in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1973. p. 307.

⁶¹⁹ Keen, Maurice: *England in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1973. pp. 309 - 10.

⁶²⁰ Keen, Maurice: *England in the Later Middle Ages*. London 1973. pp. 316 - 17.

⁶²¹ Jones, Terry: *Medieval lives*. London 2004. pp. 240 - 241. Jones' book accompanies the BBC television series of the same name.

5. Summary and conclusion

This dissertation started with the famous quote from the *Chroniques* relating the Black Prince's gallant treatment of his adversary John the Good after the French defeat at Poitiers, a quote supporting the picture we have of Froissart as a chronicler set on celebrating the traditional chivalrous virtues. However, although it may still be argued that Froissart is the 'Chronicler of chivalry', the selection of passages I have analyzed above indicates that he was so much more. Compared to writers like for instance Geoffroy de Charny, who, in his instructive manual, primarily celebrates the traditional chivalrous virtues prowess, dexterity in arms, generosity and loyalty, Froissart seems to put emphasis on a far more varied set of skills and qualities in his descriptions of noblemen. The famous Gaston Fébus, for instance, is portrayed as a skilful administrator who would keep a constant eye on the financial affairs of his realm. The key words are caution and control, as well as planning for the future.

In the account of the campaigns, sieges and battles of the first phases of the Hundred Years War we also find a more complex and pragmatic ideal being propagated by the author. Although kings and magnates are clearly celebrated for their courage, prowess and ability to encourage men to fight for their honour, they are equally praised for their ability to plan and organize, make 'sound judgements' and good tactical dispositions. John the Good, in Froissart's account, received the 'prize and the chaplet' for his valiant fighting at the battle of Poitiers. However, it was the victorious Prince Edward who gained the unanimous recognition of both parties and was able to establish himself firmly as one of the leading figures of his time. Thus, the best man, in Froissart's opinion seems to have been the man who would reconcile the traditional ideals of chivalry and courtesy with caution, sound judgement, strategic understanding and tactical skills.

Bértrand du Guesclin, who rose from humble origins to the office of Constable of France, was clearly such a man. Although du Guesclin is described as extraordinarily brave and skilled in the martial arts, witty and courteous in his dealings with his adversary the Black Prince and humble and loyal in relation to the kings and magnates of France, he is also portrayed to have been the one to urge Charles V and his council to adopt a different strategy in the war against the English, a strategy marked by caution and based on the idea that confrontation should be avoided unless the French could be certain of a successful outcome. The advice was heeded, with great success, according to the author, who seems to have applauded this new French strategy.

In the description of the downfall of Richard II in Book IV of Froissart's chronicles, the ideals and values propagated are more difficult to discern. Although Henry, in Froissart's account, was a courageous man celebrated for his nobleness, the author's constant focus on the fact that he was acting on behalf of the dreaded Londoners leaves the impression that Froissart found it difficult to give the new king his unconditional support. This impression of ambiguity is further enhanced by the juxtaposition of the description of how Henry's men urged him to dispose of Richard and the death of his defeated adversary whom Henry had promised protection on numerous occasions. Froissart clearly understood that Richard was a king who struggled to establish himself as a 'primus inter pares', and he may have felt that Richard contributed strongly to his own fate, but did he applaud the decision to overthrow him? This, I believe, is less certain, and, as a result, the picture we get of Henry is more nuanced and open-ended than we may have expected.

However, in spite of the fact that no clear answer can be found to the question of Froissart's true feelings towards Henry, Froissart's more general ideas about kingship and right and proper action can be gathered from what he relates at the end of his chronicles. The aging author clearly did not approve of actions that were

undertaken by 'orgeuil, presompacie, haynne or malvoeuillance', but actions that were marked by 'paix, justice, amour and simplese.' His ideal king was he who did not trust 'conseil senestre moult legièrement' or let himself be led to 'moult de crueuses and hastives justices', alienating the affections of his loyal men or subjects, but the king who upheld justice and peace in his realm, was able to recognise and heed the advice of his wise and loyal councillors, and related to his subjects 'sagement et doucement'. Although there can be no doubt that Froissart believed martial ambition to be a precondition for symbolic capital, in the sense that it was difficult to establish yourself as a charismatic leader of men without ever having proved your worth in some sort of armed combat, his ideal king was not necessarily he who sought armed conflict at all costs. On the contrary, the impression is that Froissart was largely favourable to the prospect of peace between England and France, and seems to have supported Richard's strategy to wage war elsewhere than in France. He also seems favourable to the fact that Richard had been able to conquer Ireland by 'amour et douceur', rather than by giving battle.

The observations above, I believe, point in the direction of a more complex and eclectic value system than we may have expected from the 'Chronicler of Chivalry.' It may of course be argued that the chivalrous ideal had never been as rigid or internalised to the degree that some researchers seem to believe.⁶²² However, it is my impression that the values propagated in Froissart's account in some respects differ widely from the ideals and values found both in historical texts of aristocratic origin

⁶²² See Gillingham, John: 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshall' in *Thirteenth-Century England II*. Proceedings of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne conference 1987. Ed. P. R. Coss og S. D. Lloyd. London 1988. In his article 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal' the English historian John Gillingham argues that the Marshal or other members of the aristocracy would by no means have let knightly ideals hinder them in making gains or diminish their chances to win a battle. A medieval knight would resort to tricks and sly cunning and retreat if he found that his possibilities for victory and gain were not good. In essence, the medieval knight would behave, assess and decide in the same manner as a modern warlord, says Gillingham.

from the earlier Middle Ages⁶²³ and in Charny's *Le livre de chevalerie*. Although the essential constituents of chivalry - loyalty, generosity and courage - are still celebrated in the *Chroniques* we cannot, in my opinion, disregard the fact that 'honour' or symbolic capital was won in far more various ways in Froissart's account than in Charny's instructive text. Although both authors may have agreed that fleeing from battle detracted from the symbolic capital of a knight or magnate, it is highly probable that only Froissart found the defensive strategy adopted by Charles V and Bertrand du Guesclin commendable. And although Charny argues that the good lord is he who 'gives new life to the territory under his command',⁶²⁴ he also states that one should not care about amassing great wealth, 'for the more worldly goods a man acquires, the more reluctant he is to die'.⁶²⁵ This leads us to suspect that Charny may not have approved of the financial dealings of Gaston Fébus, his focus on saving and fear of 'the changing fortunes of this world'.

Michel Zink in his book on Froissart says that Book IV and the Rome manuscript of Book I seem to be marked by pessimism.⁶²⁶ Peter Ainsworth in the conclusion to his book on Froissart sees the fresh details and episodes found in the Rome manuscript to be connected to 'the manner in which a new, emergent ethos threatens to disturb the ideology that has hitherto held sway; the new key-words are cynicism,

⁶²³ Although it has been demonstrated by several, including John Gillingham and myself, that the picture we get of William the Marshal in Georges Duby's analysis of the Marshal's life and deeds is far too romantic and traditional, it should for instance be noted that not a single word in the chanson celebrating the William the Marshal's deeds is devoted to his estate-management or financial dealings even though the Marshal was one of England's greatest landholders.

⁶²⁴ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. pp 59 - 60.

⁶²⁵ de Charny, Geoffroi: *A Knight's own book of Chivalry*. Introduction by Richard W. Kaeuper. Translation by Elspeth Kennedy. Philadelphia 2005. p. 64.

⁶²⁶ Zink, Michel: *Froissart et le Temps*. Paris 1998. pp. 95 - 96.

pragmatism, hypocrisy and duplicity.⁶²⁷ In my opinion, this pragmatism is noticeable even before the redactions of Book IV and the Rome manuscript, although I agree that the eclectic nature of Froissart's value system and ideals becomes more apparent as his work progresses and becomes more autonomous. But tensions are felt even in his first book when he relates the Black Prince's massacre of the inhabitants of Limoges and praises du Guesclin's suggestion to adopt a new, more defensive strategy. We should also note that Froissart already at this early stage of his narrative shows considerable interest in disclosing the more profound causes for the events he describes, especially by relating the deliberations of kings and magnates to a far greater extent than le Bel. Although a modern audience may find the account of the motives of kings and magnates unsatisfactory, in the sense that the author does not 'explain' in the same manner as a modern historian, it cannot be argued that Froissart in his narrative, even in the earlier redactions of Book I, merely 'represented' or 'celebrated'.

Whether this more eclectic value system and will to 'explain' can be seen to reflect changes in the mentality and values of the aristocratic society the author lived in is of course difficult to know absolutely. Froissart's *Chroniques* may not be an account of what Brian Stock calls 'perceived change' in the sense that the author himself believed that the aristocratic ideals and values were changing or that chivalry was in decline.⁶²⁸ Although the people of England may have lamented the days of Edward III 'when justice was upheld', the changes in outlook and ideals are not pointed out or reflected directly. However, in my opinion, the *Chroniques* indirectly bear witness to a change in the aristocratic mentality of the late 14th century. The fact that Froissart's work became so widely read and popular amongst the rulers and

⁶²⁷ Ainsworth, Peter: *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History. Truth, Myth and Fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford 1990. p. 305.

⁶²⁸ Stock, Brian: *Listening for the Text. On the uses of the Past*. Philadelphia 1990. p. 76.

magnates of his age indicates that the aristocracy itself was no longer content with historical narratives that merely 'represented'. In a tumultuous age marked by unexpected martial defeats, evolution in military technology, plague, popular uprisings and the deposition of kings and emperors, texts that could 'explain' rather than 'celebrate' and which propagated a more eclectic and complex ideal could have been highly welcome. Although the concept of chivalry may have lost none of its force in the 15th century, as argued by Keen, Vale and Flori, the modifications to the ideal may have been more profound than many have believed, incorporating elements of the mentality normally connected with the Merchant ethos; caution, control and planning for a successful and prosperous future.

Modern historians need to learn afresh how to read Froissart productively, said Albert Varvaro at the 2004 Lille-Valenciennes conference.⁶²⁹ It is my hope that this dissertation has been a contribution in this respect and that my findings can create the basis for a further discussion on the ideals, values and society depicted by Froissart in his *Chroniques*.

⁶²⁹ For reference see Ainsworth, Peter: 'Jean Froissart: a sixcentary reappraisal' in *French studies*. Vol. LIX, No.3. 2005. p. 372.

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