

Greenwich's First Royal Landscape: The Lost Palace and Park of Humphrey of Gloucester*

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I Introduction: The Elusive Duke

In April 1662 Samuel Pepys walked in Greenwich Park, 'where the king hath planted trees and made steps in the hill up to the Castle, which is very magnificent'.¹ The castle, also known as 'Duke Humphrey's Tower', clearly remained a sight to see in its newly-executed landscape setting. It was also the last vestige, although by this time much altered, of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester's Greenwich building programme, and as Pepys indicates, it was initially incorporated into the 1661–2 landscape design. However, in 1675 it was finally demolished to make way for the Royal Observatory, which was duly erected on Humphrey's foundations – a decision quickly lamented by the astronomer royal, John Flamsteed, who complained in 1676 that it was, in consequence, 'some 13½ degrees false ... of the true meridian'.² Another relic of the duke's tenure, a window containing his likeness which was probably installed soon after his death, was destroyed when the roof

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1 R. Latham and W. Matthews (eds), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: a New and Complete Transcription*, 1662 11 vols, (London, 1970–83), III, p. 63.

2 J. Bold, *Greenwich: an Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House* (London, 2000), p. 21.

of St Alfege's church collapsed in 1710.³ When in the late nineteenth century windows were installed in the succeeding building, Gloucester was overlooked in favour of depictions of Henry VIII's baptism, the marriage of Mary Tudor to Charles Brandon, and the churching of Henrietta Maria, among other Greenwich-related figures and events.⁴ More recently, although Humphrey is mentioned in a 'Summary of the 2009 "Case for a "Royal Borough"', it is claimed in the main document that Greenwich's significant association with monarchs 'and other members of the royal family' commenced in the 16th century, and that Henry VIII's birth there in 1491 is 'where the story largely starts'.⁵

Humphrey of Gloucester (1390–1447) is an often overlooked figure in Greenwich's history, and it is the purpose of this article, in the year when the borough has attained royal status, to assess what remains of his tenure. The main aim, through a brief appraisal of surviving documentary and landscape evidence, is to place the duke's park, castle and palace in the context of fifteenth-century landscape processes, seigneurial building projects, and culture. But while Charles II's 'Giant Steps' remain visible on Observatory Hill, Humphrey's footprint is harder to trace. Along with the tower, the park as he knew it was almost entirely erased by the grand schemes of the later seventeenth century. Nothing at all remains above ground of his palace, which, after embellishment by Margaret of Anjou and Edward IV, was finally demolished to make way for Henry VII's fashionable new residence. Now, as then, Gloucester's palace is overshadowed by its Tudor successor, as the 'Case for a "Royal Borough"' attests. It will be shown that Greenwich's 'story' began long before Henry VIII's birth, and that it was Humphrey's building and landscape programmes from 1427 which made Greenwich significant, fostering its association with his royal successors.

Gloucester, the fourth and last son of the marriage of Henry IV and Mary Bohun, is something of a historical enigma, partly due to his sudden death while under arrest for treason. Contemporaries widely believed he was murdered, and certainly the Lancastrian regime had

- 3 K.H. Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester: A Biography* (London, 1907), p. 448; H.S. Richardson, *Greenwich: its History, Antiquities, Improvements and Public Buildings* (London, 1834), p. 96.
- 4 A. Peacock, *Greenwich Parish Church, St Alfege: A Short History of the Church and its Environs* (Greenwich, 1951), p. 8.
- 5 Royal Borough of Greenwich, 'Local History and Heritage', http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200064/local_history_and_heritage/1125/the_case_for_a_royal_borough_ofgreenwich, accessed 5 March 2012.

no reason to perpetuate his memory.⁶ He is chiefly remembered for the power struggles of his protectorate during Henry VI's minority, against, among others, his brother John, Duke of Bedford (1389–1435), and for what is generally accepted to have been a failed political career. Humphrey has also been celebrated for introducing humanism to England, a premise which has frequently been challenged. It has recently been acknowledged, for example, that he had no Greek, and that whether he even understood the humanists' aims and outlook is unlikely.⁷ Nevertheless Humphrey, a man of culture and learning, certainly corresponded with Italian scholars, was a passionate book collector, and a patron of the arts, for all of which Greenwich was the likely setting.⁸ Indeed, it will be suggested below that elements of this complex man's worldview may once have existed in his landscape and buildings there. The park was a major component in his endeavours, its significance demonstrated by its status as the first royal park created in the environs of London, almost a full century before the next, St James's Park (1532), was made for Whitehall Palace.

II Humphrey's Imparkment in Context

Understanding the park, and Humphrey's motivations for creating it, are key to comprehending the place of Greenwich in late-medieval culture, and this will be a key theme of this paper. Although park making declined in England between 1350 and 1500, Gloucester was in the vanguard of a marked upsurge from 1426–50. This was focused on South-East England, for the first time since the Conquest.⁹ Many of these parks were created during Henry VI's minority by members of the royal household, partly as a result of the decline in forest rights due to an over-exploitation of resources. As a result, the focus of élite hunting shifted towards parks, the function of which as markers of high standing was consequently accentuated.¹⁰ During the second half of the fifteenth century, a grand house was often constructed

6 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 295–7.

7 G.L. Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester (1390–1447)' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter ODNB], 60 vols (Oxford, 2004), XXVIII, 787–93; <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14155>, accessed 25 March 2012.

8 C. Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 35.

9 S.A. Miles, *Parks in Medieval England* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 131, 141 fig. 20(5), 128, 133.

10 S.A. Miles, 'The Sociology of Park Creation in Medieval England', in R. Liddiard (ed.), *The Medieval Park: New Perspectives* (Macclesfield, 2007), pp. 21, 14.

alongside the newly created park and in this respect Humphrey of Gloucester paralleled the imparkment and building programme that had been completed by his elder brother John, Duke of Bedford at Fulbroke, Warwickshire around 1420.¹¹ The rise in park making of the second quarter of the fifteenth century also resulted from a decrease in lordly itinerancy. From the later fourteenth century, longer periods of occupation in fewer residences became the norm so that houses – and households – grew larger and more complex.¹² In this respect, the design of Humphrey's palace (and of other Lancastrian examples) was particularly innovative and forward-looking.

Humphrey was granted the manor of East Greenwich in 1427.¹³ However it is perhaps significant that it was not until probably after his c.1431 marriage to his mistress, Eleanor Cobham, that he created the park, which today still encompasses 190 of its original 200 acres.¹⁴ Recent archaeological and landscape theory has posited a close connection between deer parks and women, and although we cannot know Eleanor's feelings about Greenwich, her name is invariably mentioned alongside Gloucester's in mandates concerning the park and palace in the patent rolls.¹⁵ By the fifteenth century bow and stable hunting, in which deer were driven towards archers, had largely surpassed hunting on horseback as the preferred aristocratic pastime.¹⁶ The method was best suited to parks, where the animals could be more easily herded, and Edward of Langley's *Master of Game* (c.1406–13) shows clearly that seigneurial women participated, contrasting with their notorious invisibility in more strenuous forms of hunting across open country, in which their involvement may have been actively discouraged.¹⁷ Indeed the term 'Lady Park' occurs relatively often from the 1400s, for example that at Lathom, Lancashire, which was probably enclosed around 1470

11 Ibid., pp. 14–15, 24; A. Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300–1500: Southern England*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 2000), III, p. 155.

12 A. Emery, *Discovering Medieval Houses* (Princes Risborough, 2007), pp. 46–7.

13 The manor of West Greenwich is today known as Deptford.

14 Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 5.

15 See N. Sykes, 'Animals: The Bones of Medieval Society', in R. Gilchrist and A. Reynolds (eds), *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology, 1957–2007* (Leeds, 2009); A. Richardson, "Riding like Alexander, Hunting like Diana": Gendered Aspects of the Medieval Hunt and its Landscape Settings in England and France', *Gender and History* 24 (2012), forthcoming.

16 Mileson, *Parks in Medieval England*, p. 32.

17 W. A. and F. N. Baillie-Grohman (eds), *The Master of Game: the Oldest English Book on Hunting* (London, 1909), pp. 189, 190, 196; Richardson, "Riding like Alexander".

for Eleanor Neville, Lady Stanley.¹⁸ Yet a perhaps more pertinent example, given the probable connection with the construction of a residence, is the Lady Park at Belper, Derbyshire. This is first recorded as being so-named in 1498, although it was perhaps created for Isabella Meverell when a new manor house was built in 1439.¹⁹

Given this 'gendering of space', and that Greenwich possessed the nearest park to London, it is perhaps not surprising that its history demonstrates a close connection with late-medieval royal women and children. Significantly parks have been associated particularly with younger and unmarried ladies.²⁰ Edward IV's young sister and brothers resided at 'a tower' there in the early 1460s, and his daughter Mary (1467–82) died at the castle, to which she appears to have been removed for its clean air and pleasant view.²¹ It is also noteworthy that Mary's sister Elizabeth of York, who would have known Greenwich from childhood, indicated her fondness for the place by designing Henry VII's palace there in c.1502.²² Earlier, Margaret of Anjou coveted Greenwich so much that she appropriated it immediately after Humphrey's death. Perhaps it is not irrelevant, when considering Humphrey's motivations for imparkment, to note that he was described as 'effeminate and given over to sensual pleasures' by a near-contemporary chronicler.²³

At the very least Humphrey's new palace and park may have embodied his new domestic situation after his marriage. However, it is also possible that the imparkment was intended to resolve a disagreement with Sheen Priory, which Henry V had endowed with land in the manor in 1414.²⁴ In January 1433, Humphrey and Eleanor were granted licence to impark 200 acres of land comprising pasture, woodland, heath and furze, later recompensing the priory with property in the town of Greenwich. In the same order, they were given licence to crenellate and enclose with a stone wall their 'manor house and/or mansion' (*man(er)ium... sive mansionem*), and to erect from new a

18 N. Neil et al., *The Medieval Deer Parks of Lathom, Lancashire* (Lathom, 2004), p. 9.

19 B. Crisp et al., *Duffield Frith: History and Evolution of the Landscape of a Medieval Derbyshire Forest* (Ashbourne, 2005), p. 88; H.M. Colvin et al., *The History of the King's Works*, 6 vols (London, 1963–82), II, p. 900.

20 Sykes, 'Animals', p. 358.

21 M. Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence: George Duke of Clarence 1449–78* (Gloucester, 1980), pp. 20–1; A.D. Webster, *Greenwich Park: Its History and Associates* (London, 1902), p. 11.

22 S. Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life 1460–1547* (London, 1993), p. 34.

23 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 334.

24 Mileson, *Parks in Medieval England*, p. 153.

stone tower in the park.²⁵ These two distinct complexes may be why Gloucester obtained an almost identically-worded licence in 1437. Equally the second licence may have resulted from an attempt to maintain good relations with Henry VI on his majority in 1436–7, in the wake of accusations from the mid-1430s of the duke's overmightiness.²⁶ The palace was nonetheless completed c.1439. An indication of the former use of the area can be seen in the probably pre-1433 ridge-and-furrow cultivation identified in the south of the present park, a tangible reminder that in the later middle ages 'the less powerful were ... at risk of losing land to the more powerful'.²⁷

Humphrey's Greenwich is significant in the evolution of royal landscapes because its grand residence and park were founded simultaneously, making it anomalous in the post-Conquest period, at least for a royal landscape. It foreshadowed Henry VIII's similar schemes, notably at Nonsuch, Surrey (1538), another bijou palace in newly-established parkland.²⁸ Like Nonsuch, Greenwich may have been intended as a base for hunting in the surrounding area,²⁹ especially as its park, within the average size of 100 to 200 acres, was probably too small to support the hunting of deer on horseback. Of course, the embellishment of parks and residences had often occurred together, but during the fifteenth century there was a greater momentum towards undertaking these works simultaneously, as at Greenwich, perhaps revealing an increased association of social assertion with great houses and their settings. At Greenwich and elsewhere, fifteenth-century licences for parks and to crenellate were frequently granted together, underscoring the role of each in conveying honour and status.³⁰ This may result from concerns about social disorder in the wake of the Black Death, after which rising labour costs made parks too expensive to maintain for all but the elite members of society.

25 The National Archives [hereafter TNA], PRO C 66/433/1; *Calendar of the patent rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI* 6 vols (Norwich, 1901–10) [hereafter CPR] 1429–36, pp. 250, 240.

26 P. Davis, *English Licences to Crenellate: Some Analysis*. <http://homepage.mac.com/philipdavis/English%20sites/1876.html>, searched 25 March 2012; Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', ODNB.

27 P. Pattison and P. Struth, *Greenwich Park, Greenwich, Greater London: An Archaeological Survey. Part 1, Summary Report with Gazetteer and Geophysical Survey* (unpublished report, RCHME, March 1994), features 23, 39 and possibly 69; Miles, *Parks in Medieval England*, p. 153.

28 Thurley, *Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, p. 68.

29 Pattison and Struth, *Greenwich Park*, p. 8.

30 Miles, 'The Sociology of Park Creation', pp. 25, 24.

Gloucester's ambition and concern for public image are often commented on, although as a royal duke the necessity of asserting his status was perhaps less pressing than that of the lesser aristocracy.³¹ However, it has been noted that the acquisition of park licences invariably occurred when, or just before, their owners' social standing reached new heights, and it is worth considering Humphrey of Gloucester's career in relation to his Greenwich project.³² When imparkment and building commenced around 1433 (or earlier), he was indeed at the zenith of his power, following his removal of both Cardinal Beaufort and Ralph Cromwell from power in 1432. Shortly afterwards, in 1435, he became both captain of Calais and heir apparent (each, admittedly, due to the death of his brother, John, Duke of Bedford), and the following year the title of Count of Flanders was conferred on him. Thus in terms of stage of life, he fits the pattern of his contemporary park-makers – albeit that his park and palace were on a grander scale than most. The precise timing of the imparkment is not particularly revelatory, however, since between 1429 and 1433 Humphrey and his faction had total control of policy.³³ Indeed the enclosure of the park followed soon after a grant bestowed on him in 1432 of 6,000 marks annually for keeping the realm, plus a further 5,000 marks per annum to better maintain his estate and retinue.³⁴ Clearly much of this sum went on providing a suitable setting for his magnificence, a setting which must have been some time in the planning since he had already held the estate for half a decade.

III Gloucester's Palace: Antecedents and Influences

It has been surmised that Humphrey's residence at Greenwich was one of the finest in fifteenth-century England, and the possibility that it incorporated a manor house *and* a mansion, as described in the aforementioned 1433 licence, as well as the tower in the park, suggests a grand complex of associated buildings.³⁵ It must be said, though, that this interpretation rests on the vagaries of the Latin term 'sive',

31 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 311, 321, 277; Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', ODNB.

32 Mileson, 'The Sociology of Park Creation', p. 23.

33 A. Petrina, *Cultural Politics in 15th-Century England: the Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 135–6; Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', ODNB.

34 CPR, 1429–36, p. 184.

35 C. Jennings, *Greenwich: The Place Where Days Begin and End* (London, 1999), p. 32.

which usually means 'and', as translated in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* for 1433, but can mean 'or', as it is usually translated in such cases.³⁶ When substantial works were carried out in 1434, and repairs in 1441, it was referred to as '*man(er)ij sive hospicij*', for which the *Calendar* this time prefers 'manor or inn'.³⁷ However, the use of '*sive*' as a qualifying conjunction is clearly a convention, and perhaps the change in terminology from *mansionem* to *hospicium* in the 1441 licence is more revealing. '*Hospicium*' ('inn' or 'guest house') may refer to a separate range for visitors, and the expression may indicate either a building constructed since 1433, or an acknowledgement of the use to which Gloucester had put his palace in the intervening period, using it to welcome a court circle of intimates, as will be discussed below.

Records of Humphrey of Gloucester's movements are scant, and it is dangerous to presume that he spent the majority of his time at Greenwich. Nevertheless, he was certainly there at Christmas 1428, at Easter 1431, in September 1442, and in January and July 1445.³⁸ Excavations on the sites of both Greenwich and his London residence of Baynard's Castle have revealed pottery no earlier than the late 15th century, however, suggesting that Humphrey's occupation of either site at any one time was relatively brief.³⁹ This said, there is more evidence for the duke's sojourns at Greenwich than elsewhere, and he seems to have spent most of his time there during 1442–4.⁴⁰ Together with the level of work carried out, this suggests it was favoured above all his houses, and it is apposite to ask why. The pleasant situation and the duke's desire for a relatively private venue were centrally important, although the naval historian Geoffrey Callender, writing in 1937, afforded him a rather different motive:

... It behoved him, as Protector of the Realm, to safeguard ... defence ... There were two quick routes to the capital – the Thames, and the ... [Roman] road ... from Dover [i.e. Watling Street, the present A2] ... Humphrey ... set himself to stake out a zone embracing both routes ...; at one end ... the Thames and at the other ... Blackheath; a zone which would make him master of the waterway ...'.⁴¹

36 CPR, 1429–36, p. 240.

37 Ibid., p. 369; CPR, 1436–41, p. 538; quotation from TNA: PRO C 66/449/2 (1441).

38 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 212, 280, 375.

39 D. Gaimster, 'London's Tudor Palaces Revisited: A User's Guide to the Backlog', *The London Archaeologist* 8 (1997), pp. 124–5.

40 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 280.

41 G. Callender, 'Introduction: Greenwich before the Building of the Queen's House', in G.H. Chettle, *The Queen's House, Greenwich* (London, 1937), pp. 16–17.

Callender may have overstated matters at what was, after all, a time of looming war in Europe. However, to paraphrase the architectural historian Anthony Emery, when considering fourteenth- and fifteenth-century residences it should be remembered that the threat of invasion during the Hundred Years' War was real, and Greenwich clearly had strategic importance.⁴² Yet scholars often neglect age and stage of life when theorising landscapes and building programmes. Humphrey was already 36 when he acquired the manor, in his 43rd year when the first licence to crenellate and impark was granted, and in his 50th year by the time the palace was completed in 1439. It is thus likely to have been primarily a place of repose, albeit one from which he could observe closely the centre of power.

Greenwich was not only close to the capital but also easily accessible by water, and perhaps because of this it had a long royal history, having been a very minor royal residence since the reign of Edward I.⁴³ The manor had been a possession of King Alfred, who bestowed it on his daughter Aelfthryth when she married Baldwin II, Count of Flanders, on whose death in 918 she gave it to the abbey of St Peter, Ghent.⁴⁴ Indeed Gloucester's riverside palace may have been constructed on buildings connected with Lewisham Priory, the alien priory of the abbey, whose grand manorial hall, complete with a gatehouse roofed with tiles, was at East Greenwich.⁴⁵ In view of Gloucester's playing on popular anti-Flemish feeling in London in the mid-1420s, it is thus possible that the location of his new residence had symbolic overtones.⁴⁶ It cannot be coincidental that archaeologists have uncovered on the site of his palace the remains of a fourteenth-century timber-framed house, although the *inquisition post mortem* of Thomas Beaufort (d.1426), who held the estate immediately before Humphrey, does not include Kent, and therefore what existed at Greenwich at his death is unclear.⁴⁷

Aelfthryth's grant endured until the suppression of alien priories in 1414, and fostered Greenwich's prosperity. By 1328 it was a significant

42 Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 285.

43 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 444.

44 Jennings, *Greenwich*, p. 30.

45 G. M. Draper, 'Timber and Iron: Natural Resources for the Late Medieval Shipbuilding Industry in Kent', in S. Sweetinburgh (ed.), *Later Medieval Kent 1220–1540* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 55–78 (p. 65); P. Dixon, *Excavations at Greenwich Palace 1970–1971* (London, 1972), p. 5; Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 248.

46 Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', ODNB; Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 319–20.

47 Dixon, *Excavations at Greenwich*, p. 7; TNA, PRO C 139/30/56.

port, trading primarily with Flanders, and by 1400 it possessed a church and a market.⁴⁸ Its rising status is indicated by those residing in the area. These included Nicholas Brember, knighted for his role in suppressing the Peasants' Revolt, possibly Geoffrey Chaucer from around 1385, and the former soldier John Norbury (d.1414), Henry IV's treasurer, who was often visited by his master.⁴⁹ Indeed the king often resided at Greenwich, doubtless accompanied by his youngest son, and his queen, Joan of Navarre. The king issued letters patent at Greenwich in February 1412.⁵⁰ His will had been dated there in January 1409 and Henry finally repaired to Greenwich 'where the air was better' shortly before his death in March 1413.⁵¹

Whether or not the young Humphrey was more or less constantly present when his father was at Greenwich, he would have been familiar with the area. Aside from the fact that he was already staying at Greenwich in 1426, nearly a year before he acquired the manor, it lay on the main approach to London from Dover, cutting through the later park from Blackheath to its south.⁵² Such effective communications made the area the customary site for welcoming dignitaries arriving from the continent, and on some of these occasions Humphrey would have been present. For example, in 1400 Henry IV had received Manuel Palaeogus, Emperor of Constantinople, on Blackheath with great magnificence. In 1416 Humphrey of Gloucester himself met the Emperor Sigismund there before accompanying him to the king at Lambeth.⁵³ The importance of its situation regarding communications is clear in the instruction to Humphrey and Eleanor in July 1434 that they must replace a routeway 136 perches in length, now enclosed within their park, with another of similar proportions.⁵⁴ The new road, on Humphrey's eastern boundary, is the present Maze Hill, and archaeologists identified what was probably part of the original route in 1993–4 as a low scarp, 0.4m high, running east to west through the park.⁵⁵

Little is known for certain about Humphrey's palace, which today lies beneath the Grand Square of the Royal Naval College, and his *inquisition*

48 Draper, 'Timber and Iron', pp. 63, 65.

49 Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, p. 32.

50 CPR, 1408–13, p. 368.

51 E.F. Jacob, *The 15th Century: 1399–1485* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 100, 116.

52 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 188.

53 E.F. Jacob, *Henry V and the Invasion of France* (London, 1947), p. 114; Vickers, *Humphrey*, p. 37.

54 CPR, 1429–36, p. 369.

55 Pattison and Struth, *Greenwich Park*, feature 24.

post mortem sheds no further light.⁵⁶ However a section of it, c.21m long by 8.5m wide, was excavated in 1970–1; it was interpreted as part of a substantial structure built mainly of bricks arranged in English bond. The structure was at least two storeys high and stood close to the river, whose shoreline extended further inland than today. It almost certainly had a garden to its south, since the 1434 order refers to a highway running between the garden and the park.⁵⁷ The construction materials are significant because only Henry V's palace at Sheen, begun in 1413, had so far employed brick structurally, so that Humphrey's palace was in the forefront of its employment as a fashionable building material, and was probably much emulated.⁵⁸ It should be considered in the context of the contemporary castles of Herstmonceux in Sussex (completed by 1441), Caister in Norfolk (c.1432–45), and Ralph, Lord Cromwell's Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire (c.1440–6), all of which used brick on a major scale.⁵⁹ Significantly all of these projects were arranged around a courtyard plan, which was also the case at Greenwich.⁶⁰

The terminology used for Humphrey's palace is revealing. Several writers insist that he called it 'Bella Court', although apparently with little foundation.⁶¹ It seems to have been known as 'the Pleasaunce' ('*placentia*') during Gloucester's lifetime, as letters patent dated 'at his manor of Plaisance' in 1445 attest, and it is referred to as such throughout Queen Margaret's building accounts for 1447.⁶² The term was used from the later fourteenth century for relatively intimate buildings detached from main ranges and intended for use by a lord's favoured circle. Perhaps the most notable example of this type of building is the 'Pleasaunce' at Kenilworth, Warwickshire, fashioned for Henry V around 1414. This was a moated islet, approached, like Greenwich, by water, and accommodating a timber pavilion comprising a hall and chambers.⁶³ Indeed, Gloucester may have intended deliberately to emulate Henry's idyllic retreat, just as Bedford had replicated their brother's 'pleasaunce' at Fulbroke, also using brick rather than timber.

56 Bold, *Greenwich*, pp. 6–7; TNA, PRO C 139/127/26.

57 Dixon, *Excavations at Greenwich*, p. 7; Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 6.

58 Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, I, p. 247.

59 Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 345.

60 C. Platt, *Medieval England: A Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to 1600 AD* (Oxford, 1978), p. 178.

61 E.g. Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 38; Jennings, *Greenwich*, p. 32; Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, p. 37.

62 CPR, 1447–54, p. 21; Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 445; TNA PRO DL 28/1/11.

63 Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, I, p. 245.

The nomenclature of Humphrey's palace, then, underscores its intended function as a haven for an intimate circle, and the allusion to Henry V was probably not lost on contemporaries.⁶⁴ Gloucester had been charged with the tutelage and protection of the infant Henry VI by his dying brother, but was thwarted in his attempts to be named regent, most notably in parliament in 1428 just a year after acquiring the manor.⁶⁵ Thereafter, aspects of his literary patronage demonstrate attempts to show he was Henry V's true successor. For example he commissioned Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (c.1431–9), the prologue of which lauded his energy and ability in governing the kingdom and protecting the Church, as well as a panegyric on Henry V in 1436.⁶⁶ Perhaps not surprisingly, then, parallels may also be drawn between Greenwich and Henry's palace of Sheen, built from the proceeds of Agincourt and the conquest of Normandy, also made largely of brick.⁶⁷

What is most noteworthy about Sheen is its construction plan. Although erected on a cleared site, parts of the timber-framed royal houses of Sutton and Byfleet were used. Indeed one building retained its erstwhile identity to such an extent that it was actually known as 'Byfleet'. It cost £6,000 to construct and incorporated a bathhouse and royal chambers, and it has been suggested that it was originally intended as the main residence.⁶⁸ Apparently like Greenwich, there was therefore more than one primary building. Such Lancastrian 'double houses' are an important but overlooked stage in the development of royal palaces, and may have led to the proliferation of separate but integrated courtyards. Work at Sheen ceased on Henry V's death in 1422, but recommenced on Henry VI's coronation in 1429. The first major addition was a new courtyard, constructed north of Henry V's quadrangular building, and it has been noted that this foreshadowed the plan of Tudor palaces.⁶⁹ Since these works coincided with Gloucester's political ascendancy as king's lieutenant, it is likely that he had some influence over the building scheme. Of course this was also around the time that he commenced work

64 Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, p. 37.

65 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 111–13, 207–8.

66 Ibid., p. 392; S. Saygin, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester (1390–1447) and the Italian Humanists* (Leiden, 2002), p. 73.

67 A. Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300–1500: East Anglia, Central England and Wales*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 2000), II, p. 350; T.B. James, *The Palaces of Medieval England* (London, 1990), pp. 134, 138–9, 140.

68 Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, I, p. 247; James, *Palaces of Medieval England*, p. 140.

69 Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, pp. 246–8; Thurley, *Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, p. 9.

on his own palace at Greenwich, which doubtless either contributed to, or was influenced by, Sheen's ongoing design.

On Humphrey's death, Margaret of Anjou appropriated his palace, and it is often assumed that it was completely remodelled. It is known that in her time, it included courts for the king and queen respectively. However, Margaret did not sweep away all evidence of Humphrey, even retaining a window incorporating his arms in her chapel, which therefore must have been repaired rather than newly-built.⁷⁰ Indeed works carried out during the first year of her tenure do not suggest major rebuilding. Some destruction clearly took place, a great gate being 'lately demolished' ('*nup(er) fact' powder*'), but 6,000 bricks were bought for underpinning ('*undyrpinyng*') rather than construction; a garderobe was repaired ('*em(en)data*') not built, and roof tilers repaired many defects. Alongside the chapel, other probable pre-existing structures included a gallery overlooking the garden, a hall called 'Lehautpac', a parlour ('*p(ar)loria*') towards the small court (?) ('*p(er)v[it]a [gl(ar)dina]*'), a room which became Margaret's private chamber ('*secret(e) camere*'), a great larder or possibly solar ('*g(ra)te Saler*'), a dovecote near a double gate ('*porta([m]) du'plic*'), a kitchen complex, and possibly a bathroom ('*le stewhous*').⁷¹ Furthermore the 1970–1 excavations do not suggest that there was a complete reworking of Humphrey's plan. They uncovered the foundations of a riverfront range 8.5m broad, with two brick cross walls averaging 70cm thick, begun c.1426–33 and demolished only 'at the end of the 15th century'.⁷² There was also a '15th-century' brick pavement to the south, possibly the remnant of a paved courtyard. In the interim report, only a few 'secondary walls of uncertain function' – possibly Margaret's underpinning – and a raised floor-level were securely attributed to the queen's rebuilding.⁷³

IV Gloucester's Court at Greenwich: an Intimate Intellectual Circle?

It is probable, that Margaret's palace was essentially that built by Humphrey, and that he, rather than the queen, was responsible for its courtyards. Given the duke's literary proclivities it may be significant that

70 Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, II, p. 949; Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, p. 40.

71 TNA, PRO DL 28/1/11, mm. 5–11.

72 P. Dixon, 'Greenwich Palace Excavations 1970', *The London Archaeologist* 1 (1971), p. 220; Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 248.

73 Dixon, 'Greenwich Palace Excavations', p. 220; *Excavations at Greenwich*, pp. 10–

by the fifteenth century, as well as being employed in the townhouses of the nobility, the courtyard plan was also a feature of academic institutions.⁷⁴ For example William of Wykeham's Winchester College, erected on freshly available land, incorporated two courtyards by 1404.⁷⁵ It can be argued, of course, that due to the traditional separation of kings' and queens' apartments, English medieval palaces had long contained separate courts. By the early decades of the fifteenth century, however, the courtyard seems to have become established as the focal element in the design of palaces. According to Howard Colvin, 'one may suspect (though ... cannot prove) the emergence of a rough quadrangular layout ... in such houses as Sheen, where new building was laid out on a cleared site'.⁷⁶ This was of course true of Greenwich, the palace being contemporaneous with that at Sheen.

If Humphrey of Gloucester's palace was arranged around courtyards, this has important implications regarding the intended 'audience' for this design. For as Matthew Johnson has observed: 'It is only when one [is permitted to stand] within the inner courtyard, observing ... servants ... in livery ... bustling about ... that one understands the nature of [the] great household and thus the [lord's] identity ...'⁷⁷ Thus the courtyard plan, best understood from the inside, enhanced the status of an inner circle as well as affording greater 'privacy' – in keeping with the idea of a 'pleasaunce'. Indeed it may be that from the outset, Humphrey's intention was to establish an intellectual circle at Greenwich, which has been claimed as the setting for a court comprising, among others, the poet John Lydgate, scholars such as John Whetamstede, and Italian humanists including Pietro del Monte and his secretaries Tito Livio Frulovisi and Antonio Beccaria. The latter four are named in the preface to the translation of Palladio's *De re rustica* (c.1440), usually known as *On Husbandrie* and apparently composed for Humphrey.⁷⁸ The writer boasts that the duke himself instructed him in the art of poetry, perhaps within the palace at Greenwich. The following verses certainly suggest an overnight stay – possibly in Gloucester's 'inn':

74 J. Schofield, *Medieval Towns: The Archaeology of British Towns in their European Setting* (London, 2003), p. 206.

75 T. B. James, *Winchester: from Prehistory to the Present* (Stroud, 2007), pp. 106–7.

76 Colvin, *History of the King's Works*, I, pp. 246–7.

77 M. H. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (London, 2002), p. 61.

78 Petrina, *Cultural Politics in 15th-Century England*, pp. 130, 143, 162; D. Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 1430–1530* (Oxford, 2007), p. 43; M. Liddell (ed.), *The Middle-English Translation of Palladius' de re Rustica* (Berlin, 1896), p. vii.

For clergie, or knyghthod, or husbondrie,
 That oratour, poete, or philosophre
 hath tretid, told, or taught, in memorie
 Vche lef and lyne hath he, as shette in cofre;
 Oon nouelte vnnethe is hym to profre.
 Yit Whethamstede, and also Pers de Mounte,
 Titus, and Anthony, and y laste ofre
 And leest. Our newe is old in hym tacounte.

... He, sapient, is diligent to wise
 Alle ignoraunt, and y am oon of tho.
 He taught me metur make, and y soso
 Hym counturfete, and hope, aftir my sorow
 In God and hym to glade; and aftir woo,
 To ioy, and aftir nyght, to sey good morow.⁷⁹

Since the above verses directly follow another describing the bequest of Humphrey's books to the University of Oxford (129 works in 1439, to be followed by a further 134 in 1444), a Greenwich location for this intellectual circle is uncertain. The donation, unrivalled by any contemporary, formed the nucleus of what would become the Bodleian Library, and the basis for the expansion of classical studies in the sixteenth century. Most pertinently here, it emphasises Gloucester's strong interest in developing communities of learning.⁸⁰ The collection included many medical works, and Petrina has proposed that Humphrey's Greenwich was a centre of intellectual interest in medicine, astronomy and science, a conclusion given weight by the alchemist William Byg's claims, on being accused of heresy in the 1460s, to have left his books on magic in the duke's chamber there.⁸¹ It has also been suggested that *On Husbandrie* was intended primarily as an estate manual, in which case Greenwich, Humphrey's main residence, is at least implicit as the setting for the intellectual discussions alluded to in its preface. At the very least, the work may reflect a new focus on rural and domestic concerns, since it was produced after the duke's retirement from public life.⁸²

79 Ibid., p. 22.

80 Harriss, 'Humphrey, duke of Gloucester', ODNB; Petrina, *Cultural Politics in 15th-Century England*, p. 354.

81 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester* pp. 380–1; Petrina, *Cultural Politics in 15th-Century England*, pp. 336–7.

82 Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, p. 44.

There is some evidence for members of Humphrey's Greenwich household. Several of his retinue are named among 42 arrested for treason after his death, who dwelt 'in the duke's house' there. They were charged with plotting on 7 February 1447 'and at divers other times at Grenewiche', to kill the king, and for assembling there five days later in order to depart for the parliament at Bury St Edmunds.⁸³ Gloucester was arrested there on 18 February before dying in mysterious circumstances five days later. This political dimension points to another possible role for Greenwich, commencing not at the outset of the duke's literary patronage but during his political ascendancy. As well as a venue whose probable design encouraged intimacy and intellectual discussion, it was also a platform from which Humphrey launched attempts to assert his political authority. It was perhaps at Greenwich – although before the palace was completed – that Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431) and Bruni's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (1433) were commissioned, each of which has been interpreted as reflecting Humphrey of Gloucester's political, rather than purely literary, objectives.⁸⁴

V 'Duke Humphrey's Tower': Iconography and Setting

The evidence for Humphrey's stone castle, or tower, built from 1433 onwards, is less ambiguous than that for the palace. The great moated tower at Sheen (c.1414), itself influenced, perhaps, by reports of the donjon at Vincennes (1361–72), must have been an inspiration for the design.⁸⁵ The resurgence of the donjon in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has prompted much historical debate and speculation. It has been interpreted variously as a continuation of the tradition of Norman keeps, an innovatory development of layout and function, and a product of contemporary tensions between lords and retainers. Either way, by the fifteenth century towers were statements of lordship, conveyed through the employment of an archaic form.⁸⁶ Thus Humphrey's tower can be seen as a further means of asserting his position. Although perhaps not as grand, it can be compared with the early to mid-fifteenth century tower built at Warkworth (Northumberland),

83 CPR, 1446–52, pp. 74, 104, 110; Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 303.

84 Saygin, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 59–68.

85 TNA, PRO C 66/433/1; Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 283; Thurley, *Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, p. 9.

86 M.H. Johnson, 'Reconstructing Castles and Refashioning Identities in Renaissance England', in S. Tarlow and S. West (eds), *Familiar Past? Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain* (London, 2002), pp. 69–86 (pp. 75, 77).

and also Tattershall (c.1440–6). The work at Tattershall by Gloucester's rival, Ralph Cromwell, also included landscaping and the construction of a 'pleasaunce' surrounded by water.⁸⁷

Henry Richardson, writing in 1834, claimed that as well as constructing the tower in the park at Greenwich, Humphrey and his wife Eleanor were granted permission to 'enclose and make a tower and ditch within the [manor]' in 1433.⁸⁸ He gives no source for his quotation, which appears to derive from a misreading of the licences to crenellate, in which the walls of the manor and mansion are described, in conventional terms, as to be crenellated, embattled and turretted ('*turrelare*').⁸⁹ In introducing a ditch, which does not seem to be mentioned, Richardson may be responsible for the idea that Humphrey's parkland castle was moated. This has been repeated often.⁹⁰ It has found its way – albeit phrased more cautiously – on to the English Heritage/National Monuments Record 'Pastscape' website.⁹¹ Given the hill's topography a moat seems unlikely, and there is no archaeological evidence for it.⁹² Since it also goes unmentioned in later documentary sources one must conclude that Humphrey's moat results from a not unusual case of scholarly Chinese whispers.

Humphrey's castle seems to have consisted of a single tower, and since the Royal Observatory was erected on its generous, 1–1.2m thick basement walls, it must have been substantial.⁹³ This was probably the 'tower at Greenwich' repaired on the orders of Edward IV in 1461–2.⁹⁴ Henry VIII made more substantial changes although no archaeological evidence exists for the frequently repeated claim that he added a second tower.⁹⁵ Therefore, it is likely that the castle in Wyngaerde's 1558 view of Greenwich is that built by Humphrey.⁹⁶ When an extra

87 Ibid., p. 76; Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate*, p. 61.

88 Richardson, *Greenwich: its History*, pp. 28–9.

89 TNA, PRO C 66/433/1.

90 For example 'The original castle ... consisted of but a single tower with moat around' (Webster, *Greenwich Park*, p. 12).

91 English Heritage and NMR, 'Pastscape', Greenwich Castle, http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=404327, searched 8 April 2012.

92 Jane Sidell, Inspector of Ancient Monuments (London) English Heritage, personal communication.

93 Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 21

94 Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, p. 20.

95 E.g. Webster, *Greenwich Park*, p. 12.

96 Pattison and Struth, *Greenwich Park*, p. 9; Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses*, III, p. 248; Ashmolean Museum, WA.C.LG.IV.8a, 'Greenwich Palace from the north Bank of the Thames, 1558'.

storey was added soon after 1605, it was described as a 'lodge in the parke', and it may have served this purpose in the fifteenth century, being an ideal platform to take in views over the parkland, the palace, and the river.⁹⁷ Indeed, the site was chosen for the Royal Observatory due to its commanding height, at 65m (214 feet) above sea-level.⁹⁸ The castle may thus have functioned as a platform from which to view the hunt, and there are obvious parallels with Bertilak's castle in *Gawain and the Green Knight* (c.1375–1400), sited 'above a plateau ... with a park all around', which is often cited as an ideal template for medieval 'designed' landscapes.⁹⁹

As Robert Liddiard and Tom Williamson have argued, ascribing conscious 'design' to late-medieval seigneurial landscapes is at best problematic.¹⁰⁰ In the case of Greenwich, this would be impossible due to the later landscaping of Humphrey's park. However, they concede that landscapes were modelled with the apparently central purpose of giving aesthetic pleasure from at least the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁰¹ Surely the relatively common employment of the term 'pleasaunce' is also revealing, and at Greenwich its use betrays Humphrey's attitude to his palace's setting, which was clearly meant to impress. In 1607 Camden enthused about the view from the castle:

from whence there is a ... faire and pleasant prospect ... to the river winding in and out ... the greene meddowes and marshes underlying, the Citie of London, and the Countrie round about.¹⁰²

There is no reason to suppose that Humphrey and his contemporaries did not share such sentiments. The 'river winding in and out' may even have had personal resonances for the duke who used the swan badge of his Bohun ancestors, and who appears to have been known as 'the Swan' during his lifetime.¹⁰³

Current misgivings about 'designed' medieval landscapes ignore the existence of the park of the counts of Artois at Hesdin, completed by

97 Aslet, *The Story of Greenwich*, p. 37.

98 Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 21.

99 Quoted in O.H. Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes: Power, Community and Fortification in Medieval England* (London, 2002), p. 68.

100 R. Liddiard and T. Williamson, 'There by Design? Some Reflections on Medieval Elite Landscapes', *The Archaeological Journal* 165 (2008), 520–35.

101 *Ibid.*, 521.

102 William Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographically description of England, Scotland and Ireland Beautified with mappes*. Translated by Philemon Holland Revised, amended, and enlarged (London, 1637), p. 221.

103 Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, pp. 453–4.

1306 and convincingly interpreted as a deliberate manifestation of the settings of the medieval Romance.¹⁰⁴ Hesdin was one of a number of European castles associated with a 'gloriette' – a pavilion designed to provide views over scenery – provoking obvious parallels with Gloucester's tower. The vista at Hesdin evoked symbolism, and since it has been suggested that Humphrey was moved by the iconographic significance of art rather than mere decoration, similar meanings may have existed at Greenwich.¹⁰⁵ Equally curious is the survival of some fifty Anglo-Saxon barrows immediately inside the western park pale. Although they were only identified as such in 1784, it is debatable whether their survival was the result of a conscious decision.¹⁰⁶ Their proximity to the castle site is evident, and since they were probably more pronounced before antiquarian intervention, they could hardly have been ignored. A leading authority on Humphrey has remarked that she can think of no reason why he would have been interested in the cemetery 'but then he was a curious man', and even if no particular symbolism was assigned to the humps and bumps, they must have been at least a curiosity.¹⁰⁷

Given Humphrey's literary pretensions it is noteworthy that in the 16th century, his tower and its immediate surroundings were identified with the castle of Mirefleur in the romance *Amadis de Gaul*. Thus, Camden talks of 'that towre famous in Spanish fables, which the ... duke of Glocester begun, on an high hill',¹⁰⁸ and Paul Hentzner described it thus in 1598:

In the middle [of the park] ... is an old square tower, called Mirefleur ... mentioned in... 'Amadis de Gaul'; and joining to it a plain, where knights ... use to meet ... to exercise on horseback.¹⁰⁹

The 'Vale of Mirefleur' (probably between the castle and One Tree Hill) is mentioned in a royal document of 1606, and the epithet seems to have been commonly used until the mid-seventeenth century.¹¹⁰ While manuscripts of *Amadis de Gaul* have been dated to the 1420s,

104 A.H. van Buren, 'Reality and Literary Romance in the Park of Hesdin', in E. MacDougall (ed.), *Medieval Gardens* (Washington, 1986), pp. 117–9, 129.

105 Petrina, *Cultural Politics in 15th-Century England*, p. 344.

106 Jane Sidell, personal communication.

107 Lucy Rhymer, personal communication.

108 Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographically Description of England*, p. 221.

109 Paul Hentzner's *Travels in England during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, Translated by Horace, Late Earl of Oxford and first Printed by him at Strawberry Hill: to Which is Now Added Sir Robert Naunton's *Fragmenta Regalia* ... (London, 1797), pp. 37–8.

110 Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 40.

there is, of course, no evidence that the castle was linked to it in the fifteenth century. However it is revealing that Humphrey's castle became widely seen as a mythical place with chivalric associations, clearly aided by its lofty and idyllic situation.

The castle, together with its setting, would in any case have conveyed rather more mundane connotations. As Mileson puts it, the 'physical and symbolic association [of parks] with castles [was] evocative of power', and indeed the parks of the 15th century were frequently depicted as crenellated chivalric playgrounds.¹¹¹ Some had battlemented gatehouses, a parallel surviving in the crenellated 'Prior's Gate' at Peterborough, Northamptonshire, constructed for the abbey park c.1510. Moreover as well as conveying authority and the ability to enforce social control, the pale of a park like Greenwich, surrounding a residence rather than adjacent to it, may be likened to an outer curtilage.¹¹² This projection of lordly status must have been doubly underscored by the possession of a prominent (possible) location, such as Humphrey's tower, from which to observe that most elaborate lordly ritual: the hunt.

The nature of the terrain in Greenwich Park would have offered good cover for game, making it ideal for hunting.¹¹³ It was, of course, originally encircled with a wooden fence.¹¹⁴ It is therefore highly unlikely that there were no deer, especially since Humphrey had held the office of master of game of the king's forests and parks from 1415–16, after the death of Edward of Langley.¹¹⁵ No written evidence survives for any deer at Greenwich before the reign of Henry VII, although the late fifteenth century seems to have been a time of widespread cervine disease (often due, ironically, to overstocking), which may have killed off the park's earliest populations. For example in 1471–3 a full 2438 fallow deer are reported to have died at Clarendon Park in Wiltshire alone.¹¹⁶ Unlike Clarendon, Greenwich was outside the forest, as the 1433 licence to impark makes clear, so that the survival of detailed records are more subject to the vagaries of chance, and so the nature of hunting can only be speculated upon.¹¹⁷ There is archaeological evidence for a pond below Observatory Hill,

111 Mileson, 'The Sociology of Park Creation', p. 16.

112 Ibid., pp. 16, 15.

113 Bold, *Greenwich*, p. 7.

114 Pattison and Struth, *Greenwich Park*, p. 9.

115 CPR, 1422–9, pp. 82–3, 1436–41, p. 553.

116 TNA, PRO DL 39/2/20, mm.2, 15.

117 '... que sunt ext(ra) metas foreste', TNA, PRO C 66/433/1.

possibly 'medieval' in date, which 'may have supported deer and other wildlife'.¹¹⁸

Today there are fallow deer in Greenwich Park. However, Humphrey's tower and grand residence are long gone, and the only apparent remains of his landscaping are a couple of slight earthworks that probably represent the park's boundary, made obsolete when it was replaced with a wall after 1619.¹¹⁹ As for any remaining medieval trees, they probably perished in the 1860s when significant losses occurred due to pollution.¹²⁰ But the topography of the park remains, and may hold clues as to its primary purpose. The 'new parks' of the fifteenth century, of which Greenwich was one, were designed, like their predecessors with hunting in mind, and most provided opportunities to design areas specifically for bow and stable hunting. Many, for example, incorporated plateaus, natural amphitheatres, and steep slopes and valleys ideal for channeling deer towards carefully stationed archers, as well as hilltops from which to view the proceedings, all of which fits Greenwich perfectly.¹²¹ Given that the presence of such slopes and valleys seem to have determined the site of many fifteenth-century parks, it is certainly not going too far to suggest that the opportunities presented by the terrain at Greenwich were responsible for Humphrey's decision to settle there.¹²²

VI Conclusions: a royal prototype?

Humphrey's park, created together with a grand residence by a man at the zenith of his career, was of its time. In this respect, however, it was a departure for a royal house, and it may have subsequently influenced later schemes. There was certainly a resurgence of interest in parks on the part of the Crown in the early sixteenth century, which, as Simon Thurley has pointed out, 'influenced the choice, distribution and use of the royal houses'.¹²³ Greenwich's undoubted popularity with royal families at the end of the middle ages, might therefore have accelerated the trend for monarchs to reside in the Thames valley, fashioning similar riverside palaces such as Hampton Court and Richmond, itself

118 Pattison and Struth, *Greenwich Park*, feature 42.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 10; features 11, 22.

120 The famous 'Elizabeth Oak' is neither an oak, nor anywhere near as old as the 12th century, as is often claimed (Jane Sidell, personal communication).

121 Mileson, *Parks in Medieval England*, pp. 41–2.

122 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

123 Thurley, *Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, p. 68.

built on the site of Sheen and following a similar courtyard plan. A detailed reading of Margaret of Anjou's early accounts, together with the available archaeological data, have demonstrated that she did not completely rebuild Humphrey's palace, which appears to have incorporated courtyards like the later Tudor palaces. Rather than the royal associations with Greenwich largely beginning with the Tudors, in many respects it began earlier with the building projects of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.

Although the first royal landscape at Greenwich remains elusive and Humphrey of Gloucester is still a shadowy figure in its history, this assessment has demonstrated their importance for understanding the development of royal residences in the fifteenth century. Within the wider context of late medieval culture and seignorial building projects, Humphrey's castle, palace and park were significant and influential royal projects. Furthermore if Greenwich was the main venue for the duke's book collecting and scholarly discussions with humanists and scientists, his legacy can be said to have resurfaced in the Royal Observatory, and continued through to the founding of the Royal Naval Hospital and the later College. Due to those later grandiose works, the details of the palace can not be recovered. However, that his palace at Greenwich was built soon after the grant bestowed on Humphrey to better maintain his estate reveals its primary purpose. The park was clearly an integrated element of this display of lordly magnificence, and his legacy ultimately survives within it.