Henry VII's attitude to ruling was, for the most part, similar to that of his predecessors. He believed in the imposition of strong and unquestioned royal leadership. This was particular needed in England after an interval of instability in which the authority of the Crown had been badly damaged. However, Henry's own background also made demands on him. Henry Tudor was a stranger in England when he ascended the throne, having won that throne by conquest. Thrust in this position by the events of a single afternoon, Henry V's heir to the throne was Henry Tudor, who had the support of many of the royal predecessors.

However, as his power was insecure, he had virtually no discernible claim to the throne and he had many enemies who were only too keen to see him experience the same fate as his immediate predecessor. It was therefore essential for him to consolidate his power by establishing his dynasty and ensuring that any rivals to the throne were dealt with firmly.

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, became King Henry VII of England following his victory over Richard III's forces at the Battle of Bosworth on 22 August 1485. This victory terminated Plantagenet rule in England, and saw the establishment of a new dynasty, the Tudors. However, Henry VII's grasp of power was insecure; he had virtually no discernible claim to the throne and he had many enemies who were only too keen to see him experience the same fate as his immediate predecessor. It was therefore essential for him to consolidate his power by establishing his dynasty and ensuring that any rivals to the throne were dealt with firmly.
To understand potential rival claims
to the throne, study the family tree of the descendants
According to Extract 2, what kind of lessons did Henry learn from his experiences in exile?

From 1485, Henry’s main purpose was to ensure that he kept his throne mindful as that was how four monarchs from the previous hundred years had met untimely ends themselves. Therefore, his primary aim at the start of his reign was to consolidate his power, which he did by a number of political actions combined with military success.


Edward, Earl of Warwick (1475-99)
The son of Edward IV’s brother, the Duke of Clarence, was placed in the Tower of London in 1485. There he remained except for occasional public appearances. He was alleged to have plotted with Perkin Warbeck against Henry VII in 1499 and was beheaded for doing so.

Henry immediately consolidated his power in a number of ways:

- He dated his reign from 21 August 1485, the day before the Battle of Bosworth, thereby ensuring that anyone who had fought on the Yorkist side could be designated a traitor.
- He publicly rewarded many of his key supporters, for example by conferring knighthoods.
- He arranged for supporters to detain Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, and the Earl of Warwick, Edward IV’s nephew, each of whom could be seen as having a much greater claim to the throne than Henry himself. He made key appointments to his Council and household, for example making Sir Reginald Bray Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Sir William Stanley Chamberlain of the Household.

Sir William Stanley (c1435-95)
Stanley, the brother of Thomas Stanley, the Earl of Derby, and Henry VII’s step-uncle, was rewarded with the post of Lord Chamberlain following Bosworth. This not only gave him considerable political influence, it also enabled him to develop his landed estate in Cheshire and North Wales. It was therefore a shock when he was accused of treason.

He arranged his coronation to take place on 30 October before the meeting of his first Parliament on 7 November, thereby demonstrating that his right to the throne was based on hereditary right and not only because Parliament had sanctioned it.

- Parliamentary Acts of Attainder against Yorkists who had fought at Bosworth ensured that their property was forfeit to the Crown, thereby increasing royal income. This was further enhanced when Parliament granted Henry the customs revenues of tonnage and poundage for life. Having had her detained the previous year, in January 1486 Henry married Elizabeth of York, the daughter of King Edward IV. By waiting until the other steps towards consolidation of power had been completed, Henry was able to ensure that his assumption of the Crown was not brought about by his wife’s own claim to the throne. However, he was able to exploit in royal propaganda the union of the two houses of Lancaster and York. For example, the emblem of the Tudor rose combined the red rose of Lancaster with the white rose of York.

- A vital step in the securing of the dynasty took place in September 1489 with the birth of an heir to the throne, Prince Arthur.
For a contemporary view you might use Polydore Vergil (see Chapter 4, page 39, for a Key Profile on Polydore Vergil).

In pairs, consider the main problems which Henry might have faced on coming to the throne and how he might have sought to deal with them. Compare your answers with the information in the next section of this chapter.
Establishing the Tudor dynasty

Henry VII's position was extremely insecure. Many Yorkists, not satisfied by his marriage to Elizabeth, still regarded him as a usurper. There were several potential Yorkist claimants to the throne, such as the earls of Warwick and Lincoln, Edward J V's nephews. Moreover, the situation was complicated by the appearance of pretenders to the throne who were allegedly either Edward V or his younger brother Richard, the two murdered princes in the Tower. However, what Henry had to fear most was the influence of Margaret of Burgundy, the sister of Edward IV and Richard III. Margaret was never reconciled to the Tudor takeover and, as the dowager duchess of Burgundy, she had access to funds which enabled her to encourage the ambitions of Yorkist claimants.

Viscount Lovell and the Staffords, 1486

The first (rather minor) rising against Henry occurred at Easter, 1486. It was led by Francis, Viscount Lovell – who had prospered as a key supporter of Richard III – and Humphrey Stafford. Lovell tried to raise a rebellion in Richard III's heartland of support in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Simultaneously, Stafford tried to raise forces against Henry, drawing upon another area of Yorkist support in the Midlands. Lovell managed to escape from the king's forces, but Humphrey Stafford was captured and executed, though his younger brother and accomplice, Thomas, was pardoned. What seems significant about this rising is how little enthusiasm there was at this stage for a Yorkist rising in their traditional heartlands. It was easily suppressed, but later rebellions, promoted by Margaret of Burgundy, would prove rather more problematic.

Lambert Simnel and the rebellion of the Earl of Lincoln

Following the Lovell rebellion, leading Yorkists realised that a change in strategy was needed if they were to be successful in their attempts to get rid of Henry VII. There were two key aspects to this. Firstly, they needed a figurehead who could claim to be a Yorkist prince and, secondly, they needed the financial support to generate a significant military threat to Henry. Their figurehead was Lambert Simnel. Simnel was being passed off as the Earl of Warwick. 'To have been 111prisoned by Henry, and was even crowned as King Edward in Ireland in May 1487. The conspiracy was put together by John de la Pole, the Earl of Lincoln, himself a potential Yorkist claimant. In response to this hoax, Henry now had the real Earl of Warwick exhibited in London for all to see. Lincoln subsequently fled from Henry VII's court and had joined the failed plotter Lord Lovell at the court of Margaret of Burgundy in the Netherlands. They persuaded Margaret to support Simnel's bogus claim and to pay for a force of mercenaries to invade England.

Henry had plenty of notice that a rebellious conspiracy was being planned, and thus he had ample opportunity to plan his response. Given that Richard III's main power base was in the north of England, Henry took the gamble of reinstating the rather untrustworthy Earl of Northumberland, who led a major portion of Richard III's army at the Battle of Bosworth, to power in the north. This helped to neutralise Richard's old power base and also ensured that the traditionally Yorkist Howard family had no intention of joining the conspiracy.

Henry's victory at the Battle of Bosworth was very significant. It was this battle rather than Bosworth which really brought an end to the Wars of the Roses, and Henry's position became safer though by no means completely secure. Henry had been faced with a crisis which he had overcome by a combination of his own shrewdness and hard work, the organisational skills and military leadership of his key supporters and the willingness of landowners in many parts of the country to support his cause. He was relatively mild in his treatment of many of those who had rebelled, in the process weakening the resolve of many Yorkists to oppose him. He also began to develop the policy of using bonds of good behaviour to ensure well-behaved landowners who might otherwise face financial ruin.

They were a major cause of the, seemingly, simple matter of leasing land to war grooms, a matter that would also be covered in the Book of Stowe. The bonds of good behaviour could be used to ensure that the tenants behaved well.

John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln (c.1460-87)

Lincoln, a nephew of Edward 'L and Richard III, was the latter's designated successor. As such, I regarded as the Yorkist leader in the immediate aftermath of Boswell.
Using the information from the Introduction and this chapter, produce a report in the style of a newspaper article to explain why Henry VII's rebellion against Richard III succeeded while the Earl of Lincoln's similar rebellion against Henry VII failed.

Return to the Introduction to familiarise yourself with the War of the Roses.
The Perkin Warbeck imposture

Perkin Warbeck, a cloth trader from Tournay in Flanders, was a persistent irritant to Henry VII over a period of eight years, during which he claimed to be Richard, Duke of York. Had his activities been confined to England he might have been dismissed as a deluded pest. However, it was his ability to attract patronage from foreign rulers which transformed him from an irritant to a potentially serious threat. It also demonstrated how fragile Henry's position was considered to be by other rulers.

In 1491 Warbeck began to impersonate Richard, Duke of York in Ireland. After a brief appearance at the court of Charles VIII of France, the following year, he was forced to flee from France, to the court of Margaret of Burgundy, where he was trained as a potential Yorkist prince and began to draw English courtiers into his conspiracies.

Several years after the Battle of Stoke in 1487, Warbeck's first attempt to land in England in 1495 proved to be a fiasco. Henry had been informed of Warbeck's intentions by one of his royal agents, Sir Robert Clifford, who had infiltrated Warbeck's retinue. Warbeck was quickly defeated, and fled to the court of James IV of Scotland.

However, it would be a mistake to write off this event simply as a farce which had no chance of success. In actual fact, it could have proved very costly for Henry because the conspirators had an accomplice in the heart of Henry's government, Sir William Stanley. Stanley, Henry's step-uncle and potential traitor, was Lord Chamberlain and headed the royal household at a time when household government was still the normal model of political operation. The modern historian Christine Carpenter believes it was therefore striking that this conspiracy actually revealed Henry at his most vulnerable in the very place where he should have been most secure.

In 1496, a small Scottish force crossed the border on Warbeck’s behalf but quickly retreated. Warbeck’s interests were soon sacrificed when James gave in to Henry's offer of marriage to his daughter, Margaret. Having failed to successfully invade England from Scotland in 1496, Warbeck made a final attempt to seek the English throne by trying to exploit the uncertainties created by the Cornish Rebellion in 1497, but his forces were crushed and Warbeck eventually surrendered to the Earl of Henry, remarkably Jemmet at first, allowed Warbeck to stay at court, but confined him to the Tower after he tried to abscond. This time there was to be no mercy. Having allegedly tried to escape with the Earl of Warwick, he was accused of treason, and they were both tried and executed.

The Earl of Warwick

It was highly convenient for Henry that Warbeck's final attempts at a conspiracy enabled him to get rid of the Earl of Warwick, potentially the most obvious Yorkist claimant to the throne. Warwick was in many respects an innocent victim of the political manoeuvres of the period. Aged only ten at the time of the Battle of Bosworth, he spent most of his life in confinement before he met his fate in 1499, having been accused of plotting with Perkin Warbeck against Henry VII, he was beheaded.

Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk and Richard de la Pole, 'The White Rose'

The final piece of dynastic security concerned Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and Richard de la Pole, younger brothers of the Earl of Lincoln. Suffolk had fled to Flanders in 1498. He was persuaded to return after a short exile, but once again fled in 1501; this time seeking refuge at the court of the Emperor Maximilian. For as long as Margaret of Burgundy was politically opposed to Henry VII, Suffolk was safe. However, with the Treaty of 'indoor' in 1506, more friendly relations were restored. One feature of this improvement in relations was that Maximilian agreed to give up Suffolk, who was duly imprisoned in the Tower of London. Henry VII took no further action against him. However, Henry VIII had him executed for treason in 1513. This still left Richard de la Pole, nicknamed 'the White Rose', at large during his time in exile, but he was killed fighting for the French forces at the Battle of Pavia in 1525.

Henry's attempts to override local powers by means of his own servants, his use of spies, his institution of a personal bodyguard as soon as he became king, all point to a misguided policy, which was what he knew best. It would be surprising if local instability and Henry's deep mistrust of the nobles that bred mistrust towards the king had not raised some questions about his suitability to rule, and it is a fact that Henry was troubled by plots and rebellions for much longer than he should have been after the Battle of Stoke.

Summary

Having consolidated his power in the short term, Henry was also concerned with ensuring long-term dynastic stability; he wanted English men and women to believe that the Tudors had a legitimate claim to the throne. He aimed to ensure the succession of his line in the throny: 'hit order by keeping control over the nobility who had engaged in bitter power struggles, improve the Crown's financial position and stabilise the dynasty by securing the recognition of foreign powers.

It is clear that Henry enjoyed some success in consolidating his power and establishing his dynasty. How much of this was due to his own actions and qualities and how much was the consequence of the way in which the Yorkists had become demoralised even before the death of Richard III is open to debate. It should not be assumed that his victory at the Battle of Stoke left Henry in an unchallengable position; Henry himself certainly did not think so. The immediate threat from the House of York might have been vanquished and many Yorkists had made their peace, albeit reluctantly in some cases, with the regime. The immediate threat from his own relative Sir William Stanley had not, however, been vanquished, as the crisis with Warbeck of 1497 made only too clear. There had certainly been royal leadership, though whether it was as 'unquestioned' as Wallace MacCaffrey and John Guy have suggested, is open to some doubt.


ACTIVITY

Ttising point

How successful was Henry VII in dealing with the challenges he faced from Perkin Warbeck and why?

PRACTICE QUESTION

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in Extracts 1, 2 and 3 are in relation to Henry VII's consolidation of power.
Henry VII's government

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- royal government and the use of council under Henry VII
- Henry's use of Parliament
- Henry's domestic policies, including justice and royal finance

KEY QUESTION
As you read this chapter, consider:
- In what ways and how effect was England governed during this period?
- How important was the role of individuals and groups?

Henry VII's success as a ruler was achieved by a highly unusual style of rule which bypassed the traditional elites and relied heavily on the exercise of royal power through official channels, backed by the intervention of the monarch. To the governing classes it was daunting. Henry was a king who held them, his natural councilors and servants, at a distance. Nor did they understand a king who was obsessed with accumulating income, not for the traditional purposes of war or to reward his servants, but to ensure his freedom from dependence on their goodwill. It is not surprising they greeted his death with relief.

Adapted from Wallace MacCaffrey, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain*, 2000

Evaluating historical extracts
What view of Henry VII's style of rule is given in Extract 1? Can you summarise this view in one sentence?

Councils and the court
The king ruled with a 'council of advisers who supported him in making key decisions. Around 227 men are recorded as having attended the Council during his reign. In practice, however, Henry VII's actual working Council was a much smaller affair with around six or seven members.

The Council
The Council under Henry VII had three main functions:
- to advise the king
- to administer the realm on the king's behalf
- to make legal judgements.

A CLOSER LOOK
There were three main types of councilor:
1. Members of the nobility, such as Lords Daubeney and Dynham, though the working Council only rarely included the great magnates of the realm.
2. Churchmen such as John Morton and Richard Fox, who often had legal training and were excellent administrators.
3. Laymen, either gentry or lawyers, who were skilled administrators, such as Sir Reginald Bray and Edmund Dudley. This dependence on lawyers did not begin with Henry VII; they had also played a significant role in the 'second reign' of Edward IV from 1471, so Henry was continuing a trend which had become increasingly evident.

KEY PROFILE
John Morton (d. 1500) Morton began his public career as a passionate Lancastrian, but made his peace with the Yorkists to serve Edward IV, under whom he became the Bishop of Ely. However, he worked against Richard III and was promoted for his services by Henry to Archbishop of Canterbury in 1486. He also became a cardinal in 1493.
magnate: in this context a member of the higher ranks of the nobility

CROSS-REFERENCE
For more detail on the role of Rich Fox as churchman during Henry's reign, see his Key Profile in Chapter 36.
Sir Reginald Bray (d. 1503)
Bray had been a faithful servant of Henry Tudor for a long time. He had helped Henry to raise funds before the Battle of Bosworth. Under Henry's reign his influence was exercised through his role as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He also led the Council Learned in Law. Thomas Penn described him as the king's chief executive. As such he was more powerful than most nobles.

During Henry VII's reign the Council had no established rules and procedures, though it was a permanent body with a core membership. Sometimes members also met separately, however, to deal with key administrative concerns when the king was not present, so it was possible for different members of the Council to meet in two places simultaneously. Those professional councillors such as Bray and Dudley, who did not see themselves as courtiers, often met to deal with legal and administrative matters in London while other councillors were with the king elsewhere. The importance of the Council depended on its key members (particularly Bray) and its offshoot, the Council Learned.

It was not, however, essential for a man or woman to hold office as a councillor in order to advise the king. Indeed, the historian David Loades has argued that Henry's most influential adviser was someone who held no office, his formidable mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort.

The Great Council
The Council should not be confused with the Great Council. The Great Council was a gathering of the House of Lords, meeting without the House of Commons. It had no clearly defined functions and was an ad hoc rather than a permanent body. It met (rarely) in the unoccupied mews throughout Henry VII's reign. It usually concerned itself with matters relating to war or rebellion and was a means of binding the nobility to key decisions relating to national security.

The Council Learned
The Council's main offshoot was the Council Learned (or Council Learned in Law). This body developed during the second half of the reign, at first under Bray's leadership. It often met in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster, where it formed what the modern historian John Guy describes as a 'specialist board'. Its function was to maintain the king's revenue and to exploit his prerogative rights. It was the Council Learned which made the system of bonds and recognizances work so effectively and thus able to entrap many of the king's subjects. The workings of the Council Learned have often been seen as a rather 'shady' operation by historians. It was not a recognised court of law and those summoned before it had no chance to appeal. The modern historian Thomas Penn has argued that the Council Learned caused fear, frustration and anger, as it bypassed the normal legal system. It was, however, the expression of the...
The Tudors, like their predecessors, relied heavily on the royal court. This was the centre of government. Since wealth was power, the royal court had to be magnificent and generous. In this, Henry VII was influenced by continental examples of royal courts, especially those in Burgundy and France. The royal court was always to be found wherever the king was at any given time. It was the focus of a personal monarchy and a place for royal ceremony, about which Henry VII was very enthusiastic. It was where the power of the monarch was
demonstrated to all the courtiers in attendance. It was through the court that rewards and status were distributed to those who were deserving or, more likely, well connected.

Courtiers enjoyed paid positions or the right to receive free food. Not only was the court where advancement could be attained, it was also where the support of the king or other influential persons could be obtained, which might be useful in the event of legal problems.

**A CLOSER LOOK**

**Personal monarchy**

Medieval monarchy was personal. In any personal monarchy the political and personal power and influence of an individual depended more on the relationship that person had with the monarch than on any specific position in the court. It had a further subsidiary office which they might have held. Access to the king, therefore, was the main determinant of power and it was through the royal court that access was controlled. This remained the case whatever a particular monarch's style of kingship was.

There were different levels to the court:
1. The household proper was responsible for looking after the king, the courtiers, guests and other ‘hangers-on’ who were being entertained. These personal and catering requirements were supervised by the Lord Steward.
2. The politically important part of the system was the Chamber, presided over by the Lord Chamberlain. The position of Lord Chamberlain was both powerful and of a matter of considerable trust. It was therefore a considerable blow to Henry VII when he had been involved in a treasonable plot with the pretender Perkin Warbeck. Henry's response to this challenge was to remodel the Chamber by creating an new Privy Chamber. This character of the court, thus support. Henry cut himself off from much of the king's traditional contacts at court.

**&lr;Mjifl**

A number of the king's councillors were also courtiers. Men whose power rested as much on their physical and emotional proximity to the ruler as on their professional skills and administrative positions. Despite his legal training, Thomas Lovell began his career helping the king to dress and undress. In one sense, perhaps, every councillor was a courtier, but there does seem to have been a real distinction between Lovell and others such as Eton and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, whose careers rested almost entirely on their legal skills, who showed little interest in the chivalrous culture of the court, and whose work may have tied them to London and Westminster while others were free to travel with the king. There was no hard and fast division of roles.

Adapted from Steven J. Gunn, The courtiers of Henry VII: The Tudor Monarchy, edited by John Guy, [1997]

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**Parliament**

Parliament, comprising the House of Commons and the House of Lords, had existed since the thirteenth century, but it only met occasionally and was not, therefore, central to the system of government. It had two main functions: to pass laws and to grant taxes to the Crown. It had a further subsidiary function as a means by which local issues and grievances could be passed on to the king's officials by local Members of Parliament (MPs).

**A CLOSER LOOK**

At this time the House of Lords, comprising the Lords Spiritual (bishops and abbots of major religious houses) and the Lords Temporal (the nobility), was the more important of the two houses. The House of Commons comprised two MPs for each county, two MPs for each borough, and representatives of the two universities (Oxford and Cambridge). The right to vote was largely restricted to men of property, ‘forty shilling freethinkers’ in the counties, though the precise voting qualification varied in boroughs.

**Table 1  Henry VII’s parliaments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Nov 1485</td>
<td>Mar 1486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Nov 1487</td>
<td>Dec 1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Jan 1489</td>
<td>Feb 1490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Oct 1491</td>
<td>Mar 1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Oct 1495</td>
<td>Dec 1495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Jan 1497</td>
<td>Mar 1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>Jan 1504</td>
<td>Apr 1504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only the king could call Parliament, and Henry demonstrated his right to rule by calling his first parliament early in his reign. Henry called a total of seven parliaments and met in 1487, 1489-90, 1491-92 and 1497, yielding £203,000. Henry's extraordinary revenue: money raised by the king from additional sources as one-off payments when the faced an emergency or an unforeseeable expense to government; this could be made up of parliamentary grants, loan of clerical taxes, for example to defray tax revenue. The chivalric ideal was recorded: literature and stories, which are discussed in Chapter 6, pages 1.
final parliament in 1504 did manage, however, to limit the demand for extraordinary revenue, and received an undertaking that the king would not seek more revenue by this means.

There is little surviving evidence of the parliamentary proceedings in Henry's reign. However, the research of the historian Paul Cavill has shown, on the whole, Parliament operated effectively, the king respected its decisions, and there were a number of private acts passed in response to local demands for improvements. There is little evidence that the king tried to 'manage' Parliament through his ministers.

**Bonds and recognizances**

This was, however, only part of the picture, for Henry VII restored law and order largely through forcing many of his subjects to take out bonds and recognizances. Some of the bonds and recognizances were the result of genuine debts owed to the Crown. However, many of them were purely political. In the words of Edmund Dudley, the king wished to have many persons in danger at his pleasure: This means that the king used bonds to enforce order and obedience, and defeat the law, a system which can be regarded as morally dubious.

**The judicial system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of court</th>
<th>Area(s) of jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church courts</td>
<td>Church administration, Offences committed by the clergy, Proving of wills, Issues relating to marriage, Moral offences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local courts</td>
<td>Landholding, Rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, Use of common land, Responsibilities for drainage and land issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor courts</td>
<td>Mediation standards, Specific judicial rights granted by royal charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough courts</td>
<td>As sesses held twice a year to deal with major criminal and civil cases and presided over by the Westminster judges, Quarter sessions held four times a year, presided over by JPs, to deal with less important criminal cases as well as civil and administrative affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's courts at county level</td>
<td>Special committees, to deal with debt, fraud, and rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's common law courts</td>
<td>King's Bench, superior criminal jurisdiction, Common Pleas, dealt with major civil cases, Exchequer, dealt with issues relating to royal revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancery and other equity courts</td>
<td>Exercised jurisdiction on the basis of equity (fairness) rather than on a strict reading of the common law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Par discussion**

Based on the information in this chapter, discuss in pairs whether you think Henry's use of bond and recognizances was morally dubious. Share your thoughts with the class.

**The historiography of Henry Justice system**

On balance, Steven Gunn considers that justice improved during Henry VII's reign, with limited but effective steps being taken to improve the Christside Carpenter's judgements. Critical in her judgement was the king's mistrust of the nobility and local society.

**Domestic policy: improving royal finances**

There were a number of sources of royal income:
- Crown lands
- Profits from feudal dues and the exercise of the royal prerogative customs revenue
- Pensions from other powers profits of justice
- Extraordinary revenue.

For many years, two things were assumed about Henry VII and finance: that he was a miserly king who begrudged throwing money away like many other
Evaluating primary sources

What is the value of Source 1 to a historian researching Henry VII's attitude towards finances?

Henry VII's private accounts from 1497 include the following:

- January 6: To Hugh Vaughan for two harpsists, 13s 4d [67p]
- January 7: To a little maiden that dances, 1s 12d
- February 17: To a Welsh man that makes rhymes, 6s 6d [33p]
- May 31: To the gardener at Sheen for grafts £2

increased during the reign of

As for Empson and Dudley's tax mills, they did grind more than ever, so that it was a strange thing to see what golden showers poured down upon the king's treasure at once. And this was the more to be marvelled at, because the king's wealth was increased at the expense of others. It is said that the king's treasure was stored in his own key and keeping, at Richmond, amounting to the sum of nearly eighteen hundred thousand pounds sterling (£1.8 million), a huge mass of money even for those times.

Adapted from Francis Bacon

The Historiography of Henry VII

Even Christine Carpenter, who is very critical of many aspects of Henry's kingship, regards this g of income from Crown lands as impressive.

CHAPTER 2 | Henry VII's financial policies

There is some debate as to whether Henry's greed was a feature throughout his reign or whether he became much greedier in the later stages of the reign, as was suggested by the contemporary chronicler Polydore Vergil. Certainly, there is evidence that contemporaries were relieved at his death. Lord Mountjoy wrote that such extreme greed was now dead and Sir Thomas More wrote a Latin poem for Henry VIII which contained criticism of both Henry VII and his advisors. Henry VIII was not slow to take the hint and to achieve cheap popularity by executing Empson and Dudley.

Crown lands

Henry VII was by far the country's largest landowner and the rental income from his property was a very important part of the Crown's ordinary revenue.

Edward IV.

At the beginning of Henry's reign income had dropped to about £12,000 per year. This was because the income from lands was collected and administered through the inefficient Court of Exchequer, which exemplifies Henry's incompetence in such financial matters. It was probably in 1492 that Henry decided to revert to Edward's system of administration through the king's Chamber (in other words through the royal household rather than through an administrative department), where policies were formulated and decisions were made. Finances improved markedly and the income from land had increased by the end of the reign to around £42,000 per year. This was partly achieved by effective treasurers of the Chamber, such as Sir Thomas Lovell and Sir John Heron.

CHAPTER 1 | Henry VII, 1485-1509

The idea is that Henry VII amassed treasure worth £1,800,000, but this is pure myth. Although his revenue from all sources averaged 111,000l per annum in 1502-05, reaching 113,000l per annum by 1508, Henry had been forced to borrow money, raise loans under his signet, and was granted a benevolence by a Great Council in 1491. After his Chamber system of finance got into gear, he purchased jewellery, plate, cloth of gold etc., and he spent large sums on building.

Try to comment on the overall interpretation of each extract and any subsidiary views. In applying your own contextual knowledge, you might find it helpful to think about comments on the amount collected, the efficiency of collection, the level of indebtedness and the distribution of spending. You should provide a
Evaluating historical extracts

With reference to Extracts 3 and 4 and your understanding of the historical context which of these two extracts provides the more convincing interpretation of Henry VII's attitude to royal finance?

Fig. 4 Royal accounts signed by Henry VII
wardship: an aspect of the feudal system which enabled the Crown to gain the profits from property held by a minor.

feudal aid: a right by which the Crown could impose a tax on their tenants for the knighting of the eldest son, the marriage of the eldest daughter or to ransom a lord; this was typical of the skillful way in which Henry revived old forms of raising revenue, much to the irritation of landowners.

Statute of Uses: law passed to prevent landed property from being turned into tracts which in modern terms were mechanisms for avoiding paying tax on a deceased person's estate.

CROSS-REFERENCE
Prerogative powers are explained earlier in this chapter, page 10.

CROSS-REFERENCE
Tonnage and poundage is defined in Chapter 1, page 3.
The Treaty of Etapiés in 1492 is discussed in Chapter 3, page 24.

Henry's associations with the Church and the clergy are covered in Chapter 4, page 36.

CROSS-REFERENCE
Extraordinary revenue is explained in this chapter, page 13.
The relationship between Henry VII and the nobility is discussed in this chapter, page 14.

**Proths from feudal dues and the exercise of the royal prerogative**

The pursuit of the king's feudal rights was tightened. There were increased profits from wardship and Parliament granted a feudal aid in 1504. A thirteenth-century text, *Prerogativa Regis*, was examined by court lawyers anxious to find precedents for the levying of fees deriving from the king's prerogative, and from feudal powers. Obligations payable on the death of a feudal tenant-in-chief became a useful additional source of revenue which landowners found particularly irritating, especially when the Statute of Uses of 1489 cut out a potential loophole for avoidance of the charge.

**CLOSER LOOK**

Feudalism was the dominant social system in medieval Europe, in which the nobility held lands from the Crown in exchange for military service.

**Other sources of revenue**

- Customs revenue: tonnage and poundage had been granted for life by Henry's first parliament. Over the course of the reign there was a small increase in the annual revenue from this source from £34,000 to £38,000.
- Pensions from other powers: at the Treaty of Etapiés in 1492 the French agreed to pay Henry a pension of £5000 per annum.
- Profits of justice: this included fines and income from bonds. Bonds represented a potential rather than an actual asset. For example, between 1504 and 1507 a total of at least £200,000 was promised to the king, though not all was collected.
- Extraordinary revenue: Henry received over £400,000 from extraordinary taxation. However, raising all this revenue came at a price and helped to provoke rebellions in 1489 and 1497. Henry had to promise the Parliament, of 1504 not to raise any more money by this method. In 1489, when Parliament had granted Henry a subsidy of £75,000, the Convocation of Canterbury in addition offered £25,000 on behalf of the clergy.

In total, Henry left plate and jewels worth around £300,000 and £10,000 in cash. Although a substantial sum, this is a tax cry from !acon's estimate of £1,800,000.

Much energy was spent on improving Henry's revenues, but there was an a political price to be paid. The main victims of Henry's policies were the nation's landowners, precisely the people whose support Henry would need if his throne was threatened. Yet Henry treated them in a way which might have made them threaten the Crown. Whenever earlier medieval monarchs had adopted this strategy, the outcome for the Crown's authority had been disastrous. Henry's policies were therefore quite dangerous ones.

**Summary**

In 1874 John Richard Green put forward the argument that Edward IV and Henry VII together represented a 'new monarchy'. For a long time historians accepted that Henry was a 'new monarch' either by taking further Edward innovations in government or by being himself the innovator. The latter view...
In deciding whether or not reforms were limited in scope it is necessary to identify what the reforms were and how much change they brought about. In deciding whether they were successful it is important to establish what they were intended to achieve and the extent to which they achieved those aims.