The Last Months in the Life of King Edward III of England Seen from a Gero-Medievalist Perspective

Christian Alexander Neumann

In comparison with Antiquity and Modernity, the topic of old age in the Middle Ages has received comparatively less attention, although significant progress has been made during the past 15 years. This article focuses on a case study that deals with the final years, and especially the final months, of the life of King Edward III of England. A qualitative case study is undertaken from a "gero-medievalist" perspective, which involves the application of modern gerontological theories, concepts, and questions to a medieval topic and sources from that period. Seven aspects arising from the historical sources themselves are investigated. Edward III's old age, increasingly overshadowed by progressive illness, differed considerably from the life he led in his younger years. A gradual process of disengagement from government started from his 50th birthday onward. Although a ruler's capabilities mattered more than his exact chronological age, chronological thresholds in the course of life did gain in importance during the 14th century. After the death of many relatives and persons who were close to him, Edward entered into a rather small social convoy that many contemporaries considered to be detrimental to him and his kingdom. Above all, clerics criticized the perceived lack of morality in his age-inappropriate relationship with his young mistress, Alice Perrers. During Edward III's later years, both established and novel mechanisms were applied to compensate for the king's increasing inability to reign. Modern theories and concepts that refer to fundamental anthropological phenomena can also be effectively applied to historical topics and sources, resulting in insights which otherwise would remain unseen. In turn, historical sources stemming from the premodern period can be regarded as relevant material for modern theories, concepts and questions.

Since the turn of the millennium, historical research has explored old age

more intensively, not only, but particularly in English- and French-speaking countries. As some extensive overviews on the state of research are available, I will not go into further detail here (Neumann, "Old Age" 1-30; Classen 1-84). By and large, the perspective of the history of culture and mentalities is most commonly adopted in historical research on old age and aging in general. However, in comparison with Antiquity and Modernity, less attention has been paid to the Middle Ages, although considerable progress has been made during the last 15 years, and especially in the last 5 years, which can be seen, above all, in a number of well-researched monographs and collective volumes. In general, medievalists have preferred to analyze medical, philosophical, theological, and literary works over narrative texts and administrative documents, in which relevant information, although dispersed, is available to a considerable extent. From a historical perspective, it is striking that historical studies focusing on old age in the pre-modern period rarely sought to engage with modern gerontology, and that empirical findings were often only theorized to a very limited extent. The latter seems particularly important if the results of medieval research are to be made useful for other periods and disciplines. For several decades now, the academic field of gerontology has been opening up to the humanities, and, in turn, the humanities to gerontology. This reciprocal process is still incomplete and has thus far mainly concerned the modern period, largely neglecting the Middle Ages. Therefore, gerontology and historical medieval studies remain fundamentally separate disciplines when it comes to a thorough interdisciplinary intertwining. With this article, however, I would like to build a bridge between these two fields.

One method for combining them is the so-called interdisciplinary "gero-medievalist" approach, developed by the author (for further details, see Neumann, "Perspektiven" 387-405). This means applying theories, concepts, and questions of gerontology in a critical, reflective and, if necessary, adapted way to medieval topics and sources. As a result, the methodological and theoretical repertoire of historical medieval studies extends to the study of aging and old age. Despite certain limitations – for example, due to questions which are not applicable to medieval times or types of sources which did not exist at that time

– this method can be implemented very well when fundamental and not (or only marginally) time-bound anthropological and social phenomena are addressed. It seems that socio- and psychogerontology offer many connections in this respect. By following this approach, current concepts of aging can be historicized – a task gerontologists are best equipped to evaluate. In turn, medievalist perspectives can be re-evaluated through the lens of modern theory. For instance, empirical findings can be more appropriately theorized, a task rarely undertaken by medievalists; conversely, gerontologists that normally do not work with medieval sources now have new material and results at their disposal. In this paper, the gero-medievalist approach is applied to a case study concerning the old age of King Edward III of England and, in particular, the last months of his life, which are extremely well documented and which can therefore be reconstructed with a level of detail that is unusual for a medieval ruler. Such a case analysis has not been performed to date. As in historical research in general, what can be learned and seen by this case study is determined by the sources. As such, the explanations to come are the result of a close reading of narrative and administrative material.

Edward III is a well-studied medieval king of England and, in addition to more specialized contributions, his life has been treated in several biographies. In the last chapters of these works, aspects of his old age are studied with varying degrees of detail although references to historical research on old age are not made. Recently, the topic of old age and power has been more intensively studied (Neumann, "Masculinity and Old Age" 171-196; Neumann, "Old Age" 211-239; Lecuppre and Santinelli-Foltz 7-30; see also the many case studies in this special issue of "Médiévales") after a previous heightened interest especially in the Carolingians and Charlemagne (Bachrach 11-53; Hack; Dutton 75-94) and also in the retreat of rulers into monasteries, as exemplified by early medieval England (Higham 7-16) and the Holy Roman Empire in the High Middle Ages (Lyon 143-169). In the context of this renewed current of research into this particular facet of the *conditio humana* of those in power, however, Edward III has not yet been taken into account. The findings presented below will thus provide new insights into the subject of aging and power in the Middle Ages,

given they are based on sources specific to this king which have not been previously used in other studies on old age and power. Classical works on old age, for example, by Shulamith Shahar and George Minois also treat old age and power, but do not offer detailed case studies of Edward III or any rulers. Shahar mentions only Edward's chronological age at death (114) writing much more about the office holders of the Italian communes, feudatories, soldiers and women in powerful positions than about kings. The aim of this paper is not to compare the case of Edward III with other case studies; a comparison could be the topic of a future paper or, because of the large scope, a future book. Rather, this essay is intended to contribute to the research on both King Edward and the old age of rulers in the Middle Ages. Further, as is expounded in the introduction, it is to show that gerontology can provide many new stimuli to historical medieval studies by enabling a more in-depth analysis of medieval sources.

Edward III was born on November 13, 1312, and was the son of Edward II and Isabella of France. On February 1, 1327, at the age of 14, he was crowned king. In 1328, Edward married Philippa of Hainault. From the time of her death in 1369, Edward's age, already advanced for his time, became noticeable: he grew increasingly ill to the point of being incapable of governing in 1376 and passed away the following summer, on June 21, 1377. The monarch died at the age of 64 in his 51st regnal year. Mark Ormrod describes the last 14 months of Edward III's reign as the "bleakest phase" of his rule (Ormrod, "Edward" 550).

In this article, the following seven aspects, which can be examined by way of the available material, serve as the analytic lens: 1) concepts of (old) age and chronological thresholds; 2) the Third and Fourth Ages and "successful aging;" 3) critical life events; 4) disengagement, activity, and continuity; 5) social relationships and the social convoy; 6) masculinity and sexuality; and 7) compensation strategies. Because of their heterogeneity, these different aspects are not summarized under a single research question. If one had more material at hand – for example, there are no 'autobiographies,' biographies or personal letters written by the king himself (on the topic of autobiographies, see Monnet and Schmitt) – one could analyze more aspects, of course. For this reason, the

'king's voice' – his feelings and thoughts – is always filtered through others, which is important to bear in mind when interpreting the sources.

The explained aspect-oriented approach will reveal a multifaceted picture of the king's old age. The source material includes both narrative and administrative sources. The narrative sources mainly comprise chronicles in medieval Latin, Middle English, and Old French written by both ecclesiastical and secular authors. The administrative sources, which are largely written in Latin, mainly include charters, letters, and rolls and registers of the royal accountancy (expenditure). Where appropriate, these are complemented with information derived from encyclopedias, medical works, and sermons. The most detailed account of Edward III's last months is the "St Albans Chronicle" (in Latin) by Thomas Walsingham, who was a Benedictine monk. His detailed, critical, and vivid portrayal, developed shortly after his death, and which most probably draws on eyewitness accounts, is particularly valuable for gaining insights into the king's old age insofar as a glorifying view of his person and reign put a veil of silence over the controversial last stage of his life (Ormrod, "Edward" 587-595; Mortimer 375).

The Last Months in the Life of King Edward III

Concepts of (Old) Age and Chronological Thresholds: The Day of Birth, the 50th Birthday and the 50th Regnal Year

Concepts of (old) age are subject to historical change. Since aging is a multidimensional process, different age types can be distinguished, such as chronological, biological, physical, psychological, social, functional, and subjective age (Van Dyk 211-15; Backes and Clemens 21-29). This aspect can be combined with life course patterns (Wahl and Kruse 16-36; Kohli 1-29; Elder 165-190). The importance of chronological age and chronologically bound thresholds in the course of later life will be examined by also considering rites of passage (Van Gennep).

The calendar date of Edward III's birth was relevant to only a few chroniclers interested in the length of his reign. If his birthdate is given, it is usually the saint's feast day on which his birth occurred that is mentioned (e.g.,

Avesbury 279). While the indications of the king's age are largely correct, they sometimes deviate slightly from his actual age.

The 50th year as an "annus iobeleus," a "jubilee year," had a special symbolic meaning derived from the Bible (Leviticus 25:8–55; e.g., Lindsay 1, lib. V.37.3). For the first time in English history, a king's 50th birthday was celebrated in November 1362 and was associated with special political acts. The celebration of that specific 50th birthday is part of a long process of a growing and reawakening awareness (drawing on Roman antiquity) of the day of one's physical birth, the origins of which Jean-Claude Schmitt traces back into the 14th century. This means that Edward III stands at the very beginning of this development (Schmitt 54-55). Edward's birthday constituted the last day of a parliamentary assembly. The king granted a general pardon, which above all included the annulment of certain sentences and the return of exiled persons. Furthermore, Edward created two new duchies and a new county for his sons (Ormrod, "The Parliament" 5: 139, 152; Ormrod, "Fifty" 17). The two Church jubilees of 1300 and 1350 and also, in England, the much earlier translation of the remains of the canonized Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket already in 1220 (Eales 127-139), created a stronger awareness of the relevance of jubilee years (Beatrice 11-29). The last jubilee in particular underlined the importance of the number 50. Both the celebratory nature of the event itself and the notion of a time of grace were transferred to the secular sphere. However, they were not completely secularized; because the king ruled by divine grace, his royal pardons retained an aspect of divine legitimacy (Paravicini Bagliani, "Clemente" 270-277).

In 1376, the "Good Parliament" urgently requested the king to reestablish law and order for the common good. This act is explicitly associated with the completion of his 50th regnal year on January 25, 1377 (Ormrod, "The Parliament" 5: 333; Ormrod, "Fifty" 13-20). Due to the monarch's continuing illness, celebrations could not take place for a long period (Ormrod 2002 17). At this time, just as he had done in 1362, Edward proclaimed a general pardon ("The Statutes of the Realm" 1: 396-398; Ormrod, "Edward" 571; Lacey 115-121). By mid-February, he had regained enough strength to travel on the Thames again,

and many nobles went out in their boats to greet the royal barge (Galbraith 103). After Edward's death, his long life and reign were soon glorified, which can be explained in light of the turbulent years that followed his passing and several positive aspects of his rule (Mortimer 393-402; Ormrod "Fifty" 17-18). Thomas Walsingham, however, spoke of Edward's long reign as a burden, for reasons which will become evident later on (Taylor et al.:1 56).

The Third and Fourth Ages and "Successful Aging": Medical Care and the Relevance of a Ruler's Functionality

Although the "Third Age" and "Fourth Age" are modern concepts (Baltes and Smith 123-135; Gilleard and Higgs 369-382), the basic idea of a differentiation between an active and healthy old age and an increasingly inactive one, characterized by progressive illness, can already be found in pre-modern times. Significantly, some medieval models concerning the ages of man – whereby a generally valid terminology did not exist at the time – distinguish between "senectus" as the Third Age and "senium" as the Fourth Age (Ghellinck 39-59), and contemporary ideas about the relationship between old age and rulership were also based on this differentiation. These concepts and the practice of elections of rulers show that persons in their Third Age were generally elected, while those already in the Fourth Age appeared to be considered a risk in terms of the exercise of power (e.g., Beltrami, lib. 3, cap. 75.2 794; Finlay 157-178). While some rulers, such as the popes and the doges of Venice, were elected, this was not the case for most kings, often coming to the throne in their middle years by hereditary right and aging while in office.

For the élites, the "care of the body," the *cura corporis*, gained importance during the Middle Ages (Nicoud) and thus physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries were an integral part of the English court (Mortimer 430-432; Gask 1-16), whereby each position was permanently occupied. Therefore, the simultaneous presence of several physicians and surgeons who did not belong to the court can serve as an indicator of periods of the king's poor health. The physicians endeavored to take preventive measures against aging as early as possible, i.e., in the middle years. If "signs of aging," *accidentia senectutis*, manifested, the

aim was to limit their effects and to ensure a "successful old age" *ante litteram* (Gilleard 1-27; Gruman 1-102). Although medieval medicine was not completely independent from theological thinking, it was largely the clergy who viewed health as not being the result of secular medical treatment, but as a gift from God. Therefore, faith was supposed to protect against illness and the ailments of old age (Devlin 1: 320; Raine, doc. 258 410-411). Furthermore, the Fourth Age was considered a transitional phase toward the afterlife and resurrection. For this reason, Walsingham criticizes the king for not adequately devoting his last months to repentance (Taylor et al. 1: 116-119).

Both Thomas Walsingham and *The Brut Chronicle* see the (unspecified) onset of Edward's old age as the turning point towards an unfortunate progression in his rule (Riley 1: 328; Brie 2: 333-334). Although political failures from this period can also be adduced, it is the king's relationship with his young mistress that they primarily condemn, and which will be addressed in more detail later. From around the mid-1360s and especially the early 1370s, the king had a growing need for medical care (Mortimer 430; Tout, 3: 286-287; 4: 182; e.g., Public Record Office 16: 87, 354, 368, 382). Walsingham describes Edward's Fourth Age in detail, stating that the badly weakened king became "naïve" and "feeble-minded" (Taylor et al. 1: 54-55). By the summer of 1376, his condition had deteriorated to such an extent that he had "fallen into languor." Although Walsingham considers some weakness due to old age to be a natural development, he perceives the scale of the manifestation in this case to be pathological. During a period of very poor health from about July to September, several physicians and surgeons worked simultaneously for the king's recovery. On October 7, Edward had his will drawn up (Ormrod, "Edward" 564, 581). In his account, Walsingham combines the aspects of amorous folly and declining mental powers from a moral-theological perspective. One finds the same viewpoint in the appendix to the "Chronicon Angliae" (this is a part of the "St. Albans Chronicle," cf. Clark and Preest 21). There, the king is compared to an eight-year-old boy and the Fourth Age is thereby put on a level with childhood (Thompson 401).

After a modest improvement, Edward's health deteriorated again from the beginning of the new year. *The Brut Chronicle* speaks of a "blow" and "paralysis" (Brie 2: 331), which could refer to a stroke, and the monarch may indeed have suffered a series of milder strokes prior to a final and fatal one (Ormrod, "Edward" 563). When receiving envoys, he is described as a "statue" or "wax figure," *simulacrum*, and was unable to speak (Taylor et al. 1: 102). It is generally believed that the distorted mouth of Edward's funeral effigy quite clearly shows that he died of a stroke (Ormrod, "Edward" 582-583; Hope 517, 530-533). Beyond evidence for this cause of death, Walsingham mentions a "disease of the intestines/rectum" (Taylor et al. 1: 116) while the "Anonimalle Chronicle" (Galbraith 95) speaks of an "ulcer," or *enpostyme*. This might indicate that prostate cancer which was already known in the Middle Ages. The English surgeon John of Arderne wrote a treatise on rectal ulcers. In it, he describes prostate cancer as *bubo* for which he found no effective cure except God's help (Power 37-38; Ormrod, "Edward" 563).

Critical life events: coping with the death of family members, relatives, companions, and friends

This section explores the major critical life events (Filipp) that Edward had to cope with in his old age. The French chronicler Jean Froissart writes about the queen's death after about 40 years of marriage. From the late 1350s, the queen became seriously ill and confined to her bed during her last years. No details are provided about her illness, except that it had a severe impact on her health (Warner 237, 254, 261-264). In a deathbed scene, Froissart presents Edward and Philippa as a loving and intimate couple. No longer-term mistresses or illegitimate children are known until the early 1360s so that – by contemporary standards – the king had remained exceptionally faithful to his wife (Warner 239). Edward was deeply affected by her death, feeling "a great sadness in his heart" (Buchon 1: 593).

Moreover, the aging king witnessed the death of some of his children, numerous advisors, and companions (Mortimer 369-373). Edward's firstborn and homonymous son, the "Black Prince," had been seriously ill since 1367. The

prince suffered from a regularly recurring illness that made him bedridden. He died on June 8, 1376 (Taylor et al. 1: 32-33; Warner 246; Green 34-51). Many contemporaries hailed him an outstanding knight and a worthy successor. His father's grief becomes particularly evident in the "Anonimalle Chronicle," which relates his profound sorrow right before his own health badly deteriorates, and which gives the impression of a psychosomatic explanation for his distress. That the king suffered can be deduced by the fact that he retreated to his manor in Havering, staying there largely by himself for a month (Galbraith 94; Ormrod, "Edward" 558).

Disengagement, Continuity, and Activity: A Continuous Process of Withdrawal from Royal Duties and a Redefinition of Roles

Drawing on disengagement theory, this section analyzes whether Edward gradually withdrew from government, what roles and norms were placed upon him, and how he may have perceived his changing position (Achenbaum and Bengston 756-763; Cumming and Henry). These questions will be examined through the lens of continuity and activity theory, exploring whether Edward continued his midlife activities and, if so, how these activities were perceived both by contemporaries and by the monarch himself (Atchley 183-190; Lemon, Bengston and Peterson 511-523).

From the early 1360s, a continuous process of withdrawal from royal duties and activities can be observed, accelerating from 1369 onward and drastically so from 1376. Walsingham complains that Edward had already given up military activities to a large extent at the age of approximately 50 (Thompson 401). Although the king eventually stopped actively participating in warfare, it can be assumed that his role as a chivalrous warrior king mattered very much to him and essentially shaped his self-image (Mortimer 395). Throughout his life, the ruler fostered a court culture that centered on chivalry – Chris Given-Wilson speaks of its "military character" (Given-Wilson 280). One visible sign of this was a tight sequence of tournaments and jousts. As time went on, Edward's role as a patron of chivalric culture gained significance, the peak of which was between 1333 and 1363 (Mortimer 395). This new role may have given him

some compensation for active warfare. During Edward's old age, tournament activity was also declining (Given-Wilson 280-282), and Clifford Brewer hypothesizes that the king's later illnesses may have been related to head injuries he had suffered during tournaments (Brewer 66).

As for the king's mobility, it can be observed that the geographical range of his actions gradually started narrowing. The meetings of the royal council were increasingly held without him and his representation in public became more and more infrequent. Additionally, the issuing of charters declined significantly (Mortimer 369; Tout 4: 183, 286-287). Edward's regret over the loss of some enjoyable activities from previous phases of his life during his prolonged 1376 illness is evident in Walsingham's report, which suggests that the king repeatedly claimed he would soon recover to resume falconry, hunting, and other activities for which he had a great passion (Given-Wilson 288-293) – pursuits Walsingham disparagingly dismissed as worldly "trifles." Therefore, it is not surprising that the manors where he resided in his old age were surrounded by hunting grounds so that he did not have to travel far. In response to this change in his abilities, wild animals were transported there from more distant estates.

Social Relationships and the Social Convoy: A More Private Life for the King, but Heightened Dependency on Fewer People

Social relationships can change both quantitatively and qualitatively during old age. According to socio-emotional selectivity theory, personal needs, goals, and priorities undergo a transformation over time, whereby certain intimate and trusted relationships take the place of a larger network of sometimes superficial acquaintances (Carstensen et al. 103-123). An important function of social networks is to provide practical as well as psychological support to older adults, which can be called a "social convoy" (Antonucci and Akiyama 519-527). In the following, the focus lies on the court and household as a network of social relationships. In the next section, Edward's relationship with his mistress, Alice Perrers – who was 30 years younger than he – will be studied in the context of masculinity and sexuality, which mattered very much, according to his contemporaries.

Together with the aging king, the royal household (approximately 400 people) became more sedentary. Edward, however, withdrew from the main court most of the time, surrounding himself instead with his much smaller *privata familia* of about 50 people (Mortimer 369; Given-Wilson 263, 298-299). Three reasons seem plausible to explain the change: increasing periods of illness, different personal needs, and the influence of Alice Perrers, i.e., her efforts to limit access to the king (Tout 2: 87). In the beginning, one can suppose that the much more private atmosphere suited Edward's own needs. As time went by, Perrers succeeded in having people she trusted appointed to vacant positions. Quite a few of the many new court members, who were between 25 and 30 years younger than the king and to whom he could hardly relate (Mortimer 371-373), were corrupt and took advantage of Edward's weakness, especially as he was largely isolated from current news and events. A particular point of controversy was his dependence on the influence of a single person – and a woman on top of that, as his contemporary sources often emphasize (Devlin 1: 315-321; Holmes 103-104). From the perspective of many observers, Edward III was caught in a fatal social convoy *ante litteram*. For his part, in turn, one can assume that he enjoyed the presence of his mistress and courtiers in relative privacy, although this cannot be ascertained.

MASCULINITY AND SEXUALITY: INCREASING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND REALITY AND THE QUESTION OF AGE-APPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIPS

Aging puts masculinity at risk to the extent that physical and mental decline leads to a loss of control over one's body and behavior. In addition, one's social position can be diminished or even lost. Especially for people in positions of power, old age becomes critical when functionality declines (K. Lewis 2, 9). Edward's image of a man and king was shaped by chivalric virtues which above all include physical strength and bravery (Green 44; Mortimer 369; Given-Wilson 280-281). As aging progresses, however, a growing gap between expectation and reality comes about.

By the mid-1370s, Alice Perrers had risen to become one of the most powerful people at court, and Walsingham makes her the central figure of his accusations. Ormrod considers Walsingham's focus on her too one-sided and argues that the court as a whole and the crises and political failures of Edward III's final years should also be taken into account (Ormrod, "The Trials" 385). Walsingham describes Perrers as being of low birth, ruthless, unattractive, and manipulative (Taylor et al. 1: 42-43). However, it is evident that the ruler saw her in another light because he showered her with gifts (Warner 238). Their relationship started around 1366 when Edward was about 54 years old, and Queen Philippa lay in bed, already seriously ill. While queens were expected to be faithful to their husbands, this norm did not apply to their spouses (Warner 238; Ormrod, "Edward" 585).

According to Walsingham, Perrer's depravity and that of the equally perfidious courtiers manifested itself in "bad counsel" that had corrupted the "good" king Edward (Taylor et al. 1: 26-27) and, in his account, misogyny and ideas of class mingle with indignation about moral degeneration (Ormrod, "Who was Alice" 219-220, 224). Even more shocking for the cleric was the fact that Perrers was already married (Ormrod, "The Trials" 367, 371). Although the king was informed about this, he denied any prior knowledge (Taylor et al. 1: 46-47). According to Walsingham's evaluation, Perrers's seduction had erased the king's reason and made him a "fool." Through the folly of love – which was not appropriate for the king's age because love and sexuality were held to be attributes of youth – his authority, honor, and manhood were diminished (Ibid. 44-47). Edward had reduced himself to a ridiculed *senex amans* (Everest 99-114) – a state that was particularly unworthy of a king. This kind of frenzy as described here is attributed to an emotional obsession with a particular person. Besides, it is said that it usually occurs in youth when this state of mind is considered to be more acceptable than in old age. Later on, when Walsingham speaks of the king's mental weakness, he does not speak of madness. Rather, the ruler's diminished mental faculties are explained by declining physical strength. The subject of madness would be a topic in its own right, which needs to be examined using other examples than Edward III. For example, the case

of Charles VI of France is particularly well known (Guenée). In this context, questions to be asked include, among others, modern understanding(s) of madness, medieval understanding(s) of it as well as the terms used, and suitable case studies. Madness is not a phenomenon specific to old age and cannot be equated with or deduced with certainty from terms like 'foolishness' and 'stupidity' (in medieval Latin "stultitia" or "stupiditas") without further inquiries into a particular case. Walsingham goes on to say that as a result of sexual intercourse, Perrers had completely dried out the king's body, which was already inwardly dry at his age (and externally moist). His *humor naturalis*, his inner moisture and warmth, had nearly completely vanished so that Edward had lost all his strength and his life was unnaturally shortened (Taylor et al. 1: 46). By arguing this way, Walsingham takes up the contemporary humoral-pathological concept of aging (Paravicini Bagliani, "The Prolongation", 133-153; McVaugh 259-283). While physicians conceded that older adults experience reduced sexuality (Covey 93-100; e.g., Lind, ch. 3 40-41, ch. 43 273-274), clerics advocated for an old age entirely devoid of sexual activity and other worldly desires (Taylor et al. 1: 46).

During the "Good Parliament," which will be dealt with in the next chapter, a formal trial of Alice Perrers was dismissed; instead, the king was allowed to take a decision at his own discretion. Ormrod mentions some reasons for this lenient attitude, one of which was Parliament's respect for the ailing king (Ormrod, "The Trials" 371). Given-Wilson believes that Edward's excellent reputation as a great warrior might have afforded him protection from crushing opposition (Given-Wilson 299). After the king had passed away, the time of his courtiers also came to an end and during the first parliament of Edward's successor and grandson, Richard II, Perrers was formally tried (Martin and Given-Wilson 6: 26-32). Her actions, for which she was then condemned, were considered crimes both against the person of the king and the kingdom. In the text of parliamentary decisions, Edward is referred to as a "grandfather". While this terminology evidently refers to kinship relations, it may also suggest that Edward was thought of as having been easily influenceable in his old age.

Compensation Strategies: Dealing with the King's Lacking Ability to Govern

In this last section, the compensation strategies that Edward III himself and his environment employed in the face of the king's diminishing abilities will be analyzed (Baltes and Freund 642-662). Furthermore, and going beyond the office of the king, the structures, i.e., the system of government, will be considered. Edward's growing absence from the political scene provoked more and more discontent because no measures were undertaken to put an end to corruption and revoke decisions favorable to only a few people. To bring about solutions, the previously mentioned "Good Parliament" convened from April 28 to July 10, 1376 (Holmes). Edward opened it and attended during the first days, but he subsequently withdrew because of his poor health (Galbraith 79-83). As his firstborn son Edward was seriously ill, his son John of Gaunt acted as the president and later as the king's representative (Riley 1: 322; Ormrod, "Edward" 552; Given-Wilson 255).

Walsingham characterizes John as shady, greedy for power, an adulterer, and an unjust judge (Taylor et al. 1: 13-15, 30-31). During the parliamentary sessions, numerous courtiers were tried and sentenced to give up their positions and pay amendments to the state. Because of the king's immobility, members of all estates went to talk to him in his manor (Ormrod, "The Parliament" 5: 315). In this context, Anthony Goodman observes that, beyond Walsingham's perspective, those of John and Edward III must also be considered as well, although they are hard to validate. It is quite possible, however, that for John, the sentences represented an attack on his father. Edward very likely disagreed with parliamentary decisions, potentially prompting John to silence those opposing the Crown (Goodman 58-59). Edward III was also unable to preside over the next Parliament in the spring of 1377, which is why he assigned the presidency to his grandson (Ormrod, "The Parliament" 5: 394). At the end of the meeting, the king pardoned all those sentenced. Furthermore, John had already taken action against all critics. This happened during the fall of 1376 when his father's health was very poor and, while this might have been a coincidence, it could equally have been deliberate (Given-Wilson 255-256, 271-272).

During the "Good Parliament," it was also decided to establish a council of 12 nobles to assist the king, because the latter's mental health was considered to be critical (Taylor et al. 1: 50–51). The nobles to be elected were to be loyal to the kingdom, to only decide unanimously on important matters, and to keep Edward's favorites in check. Contemporaries thus equated the situation with that of a regency, which can be observed in a similar body that was instituted during the minority of Richard II (N. Lewis 246-250). Nevertheless, Edward's case differs from that of a regency council for an underage king, in that Edward was an adult, and it was always expected that he would resume governing. Despite all provisions taken, the new council could not start its work because its members were sent away by the courtiers. Furthermore, the strategy of compensation lacked the support of the nobility because it was the commoners who dominated the Parliament of 1376 and pushed for action. According to Walsingham, the king's weakness contributed to the failure to end the severe maladministration (Taylor et al. 1: 94-97; Given-Wilson 256-257). At the end of 1376, Edward officially appointed Richard his successor, which meant that the important question of succession was still settled by the king himself.

Conclusions and Perspectives

Compared with other 13th- and 14th-century rulers, Edward's later years are relatively well documented, providing rare insights into important aspects of old age in this period. In the following, the major findings of this paper are summarized, and connections to modern gerontology and modern times and some perspectives for future research are presented.

Although Christian religious interpretations of aging and old age persist today, they were omnipresent in the Middle Ages and exerted a strong influence on the thinking of many contemporaries, so that aging in the Middle Ages must always be examined in the context of the religious beliefs of the time. Therefore, a fundamental distinction must be made between secular and clerical perspectives on old age in the Middle Ages and, in some cases, clear divergences can be observed (e.g., concerning health and illness, sexuality, and court culture), from which conflicts arose. In the 14th century, there was a growing interest in

the accurate measurement of chronological age and the length of reign. Depending on the situation and perspective, a long life and reign could be viewed ambivalently. Inspired by Church jubilees, the number 50 was given a symbolic meaning in two respects: for the individual himself and for the duration of a reign. In the Middle Ages, however, chronological age was less important than it is today. The celebrations of Edward III's 50th birthday and jubilee on the throne are reflections of the growing importance of chronologically bound turning points or thresholds in a life course, which were also marked by rituals. One can see that current conditions and attitudes taken for granted as a rule – such as the importance of one's chronological age – either did not exist in the Middle Ages or had just started to develop. It is noteworthy that in the Middle Ages there were no universally accepted thresholds for when a person was considered old, yet the age of 50 increasingly came to mark the beginning of old age more clearly.

In terms of their meanings, the Third Age, the Fourth Age and the concept of "successful aging" as well can be found in very similar forms in the Middle Ages, albeit in social contexts that differ significantly from those of modern Western industrial societies with retirement systems. A ruler's health was as much a personal as it was a political matter, and maintaining functionality was given the highest priority. As a result, medical care was intensified – especially during old age – to prolong the Third Age for as long as possible. Taking care of one's body with the aim of achieving longevity and spending one's old age in the best possible health was a widespread goal of medieval elites. This desire could be linked to current debates on longevity. It raises the question if costly methods of achieving longevity and maintaining health in old age is not just as much an elite phenomenon today as it was in the Middle Ages. Medieval terms for diseases and their descriptions cannot be equated with supposed modern equivalents. Diseases were interpreted not only in medical and natural-scientific terms, but also through the lens of moral theology.

In the latter context, the question of the (in)appropriateness of behavior in old age played an important role. In his later years, King Edward faced a series of critical life events. Descriptions of emotions, such as profound grief in old

age, as presented here are from the perspective of outsiders; for this reason, further sources than the existing literary accounts must be consulted in order to confirm such depictions (more sources would certainly be helpful, but they are not available in this case). Edward III outlived his wife, his first-born son and some of his other children, as well as numerous trusted friends and companions, and he evidently found it difficult to cope with those losses. According to his contemporaries, the deaths kept plunging him into mourning and sadness, which was said to have adversely affected his health.

Starting already in the early 1360s, a continuous disengagement can be observed in several domains (e.g., council meetings, issue of charters, court life, representation), which accelerated significantly from 1376 onward. With a level of detail rarely found, an analysis based on a plethora of primary sources allows us to trace how Edward redefined his roles in old age and how much he valued continuity with his previous life. The fundamental questions of continuity and discontinuity, as well as of a redefinition of one's societal role(s), could also be applied to the reigning monarchs and leaders of our time, as well as to older people in general, if one intends to keep to the topic addressed in this paper. With time, both the king and his court became increasingly sedentary, when kingship was still essentially itinerant. To what extent Edward himself wished this to happen cannot be answered with certainty, although his deteriorating health increasingly limited his actions, thereby leaving him no alternatives in the end. As his role as a chivalric warrior-king meant a lot to him, one can suppose that he must have regretted the loss of his former physical strength. Likewise, he felt depressed about not being able to continue to pursue pleasant activities such as falconry and hunting. However, the described development cannot be seen as entirely negative, as the king also developed new roles no longer characterized by physical strength. Nevertheless, Edward's increasing frailty eroded his conception of masculinity, raising the general question of how masculinity in old age was constructed during the Middle Ages, and how typical the present case is within this context. This complex topic would require further investigation using suitable examples. One cannot assume that there was a single form of masculinity; rather, one should speak of 'masculinities' – with perhaps one

form prevailing in certain social strata, alongside other forms (Neumann, "Masculinity and Old Age"). How medieval masculinities in old age compare to modern ones is yet another topic.

Edward's network of social relationships changed markedly during his old age and was reduced to a quite small circle of people. The concept of 'social convoy' can be used to analyze Edward's situation. Many observers saw this development – especially his increasing dependence on his young mistress – as being detrimental to the kingdom. The ruler had entered a social convoy that would not be dismantled until his death. Regarding the king's point of view, one can only speculate, whereas the perspective of his critics can be examined very accurately. What becomes clear is the ambivalence about the effects of the (relatively) small network surrounding the ruler. In particular, clerics like Thomas Walsingham criticized the ruler's age-inappropriate sexual behavior. Edward made a fool of himself and diminished his authority and honor by clinging to his relationship with Perrers and allowing her to gain more and more power over him as he grew weaker. This negative association of continued sexuality in old age and of mixed-age couples was widespread in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, lay elites apparently did not consistently adhere to this predominantly clerical viewpoint. Modern gerontology could ask whether these negative views persist today. Although Edward's personal views largely remain unknown, it can be assumed that his relationship with Alice Perrers was very important to him. In his final years, Edward suffered from serious illnesses, presumably strokes and prostate cancer. By the summer of 1376, he had become incapable of exercising government. In response to his irreversible and severe dysfunctionality, various compensatory measures were devised, such as delegating tasks to family members and the (subsequently failed) establishment of a special council that resembled a regency government. While the Third Age was still considered a suitable, if not ideal, stage of life for a king's rule because physical strength played a prominent role in leadership, the Fourth Age was held to be a grave risk for political stability, which is why it was put on a level with the precarious stage of childhood. The question of how older people cope with a temporary or permanent loss of functionality and how the people around

them respond to this is of timeless significance, which could also be transferred to today's monarchies. In the English monarchy of the Middle Ages, there were no institutionalized or formally established mechanisms for such cases. It was only customary to delegate certain powers to family members, while an appointed special council never took up work.

This case study clearly illustrates that a number of modern socio- and psychogerontological theories, concepts, and issues can be examined on the basis of medieval sources. Even if they were not labeled with today's terms, some phenomena of old age and aging can be traced far back in history. Which insights can be gained and to what degree is determined by the historical sources which have become down to us. Beyond Edward III, some other medieval rulers reached an advanced age. Their case studies, which rely on different sources, will reveal different aspects of aging and old age. This paper is therefore a contribution to understanding the relationship between old age and rulership in the pre-modern period. Analyzing other cases can reveal further aspects of old age and rulership – one of several topics of interest, as many possibilities for future research on old age in the Middle Ages are still open – and more, if the geromedievalist approach is transferred to other periods of history. It would be worth considering whether modern gerontological theories could be fruitfully applied in other historical contexts than the Middle Ages as well. Ultimately, this would lead to a current of historical research on old age and aging that actively integrates modern gerontology in order to provide its own contribution to common points of interest between the humanities and the natural and behavioral sciences.

WORKS CITED

Achenbaum, W. Andrew, and Vern L. Bengtson. "Re-Engaging the Disengagement Theory of Aging: on the History and Assessment of Theory Development in Gerontology." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 34, no. 6, 1994, pp. 756-763. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/34.6.756

Antonucci, Toni C., and Hiroko Akiyama. "Social Networks in Adult Life and a Preliminary Examination of the Convoy Model." *Journal of Gerontology*, vol. 42, no. 5, 1987, pp. 519-527. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronj/42.5.519

Atchley, Robert C. "A Continuity Theory of Normal Aging." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1989, pp. 183-190. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/29.2.183

Avesbury, Robert de. "De gestis mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii." *Adae Murimuth continuatio chronicarum. De gestis mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, edited by Edward M. Thompson, Longman, 1889, pp. 279-471.

Bachrach, Bernard S. "Charlemagne's Health in 'Old age': Did it Affect Carolingian Military Strategy?", *Mediävistik*, vol. 32, 2019, 11-53.

Backes, Gertrud, and Wolfgang Clemens. *Lebensphase Alter. Eine Einführung in die sozialwissenschaftliche Alternsforschung*, Beltz Juventa, 2008.

Baltes, Paul B., and Alexandra M. Freund. "Life-Management Strategies of Selection, Optimization, and Compensation: Measurement by Self-Report and Construct Validity." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2002, pp. 642-662. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.4.642

Baltes, Paul B., and Jacqui Smith. "New Frontiers in the Future of Aging: From Successful Aging of the Young Old to the Dilemmas of the Fourth Age." *Gerontology*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2003, pp. 123-135. https://doi.org/10.1159/000067946

Beatrice, Pier Franco. "Il giubileo ebraico nell'esegesi biblico-patristica e medievale." *I giubilei nella storia della Chiesa*, Libreria editrice vaticana, 2001, pp. 11-29.

Beltrami, Pietro G., editor. *Brunetto Latini: Trésor*, Einaudi, 2008.

Brewer, Clifford. *The Death of Kings. A Medical History of the Kings and Queens of England*, Abson Books, 2017.

Brie, Friedrich W. D., editor. *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, vol. 2, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1908.

Buchon, Jean Alexandre C., editor. *Jean Froissart: Chroniques*, vol. 1, Wattelier, 1867.

Carstensen, Laura L., et al. "Socioemotional Selectivity Theory and the Regulation of Emotion in the Second Half of Life." *Motivation and Emotion*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2003, pp. 103-123. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024569803230

Clark, James G., and David Preest, editors. *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, Boydell Press, 2010.

Classen, Albrecht. "Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Also an Introduction." *Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by idem, De Gruyter, 2007, pp. 1-84.

Covey, Herbert C. "Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Sexuality of the Elderly during the Middle Ages." *The Gerontologist*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1989, pp. 93-100. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/29.1.93

Cumming, Elaine, and William Henry. *Growing Old. The Process of Disengagement*, Basic Books, 1961.

Devlin, Mary A., editor. *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Dutton, Paul E. "Beyond the Topos of Senescence: the Political Problems of Aged Carolingian Rulers." *Aging and the Aged in Medieval Europe*, edited by Michael McMahon Sheehan, Pontifical Inst. of Mediaeval Studies, 1990, pp. 75-94.

Eales, Richard G. "The Political Setting of the Becket Translation of 1220." *Studies in Church History*, vol. 30, 1993, pp. 127-139.

Elder, Glen H. "Age Differentiation and the Life Course." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1975, pp. 165-190. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.01.080175.001121

Everest, Carol A. "Sex and Old Age in Chaucer's 'Reeve's Prologue'." *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1996, pp. 99-114. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095966

Filipp, Sigrun-Heide. *Kritische Lebensereignisse*, Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1981.

Finlay, Robert. "The Venetian Republic as a Gerontocracy: Age and Politics in the Renaissance." *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 8, 1978, pp. 157-178.

Galbraith, Vivian H., editor. *The Anonimalle Chronicle 1333 to 1381*, Manchester University Press, 1927.

Gask, George E. "The Medical Staff of King Edward the Third." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 19, 1926, pp. 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/003591572601901 70

Ghellinck, Joseph de. "Iuventus, gravitas, senectus." *Studia Mediaevalia in honorem admodum reverendi patris Raymundi Josephi Martin*, De Tempel, 1948, pp. 39-59.

Gilleard, Chris, and Paul Higgs. "The Third Age: Class, Cohort or Generation?" *Ageing and Society*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2002, pp. 369-382. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X0200870X

Gilleard, Chris. "Renaissance Treatises on 'Successful Ageing'." *Ageing and Society*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2013, pp. 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X11001127

Given-Wilson, Chris. *The Court and Household of Edward III* [Thesis, PhD Doctor of Philosophy, University of St Andrews] 1976. http://hdl.handle.net/10023/2733

Goodman, Anthony E. *John of Gaunt. Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe*, Routledge, 1992.

Green, David. "Masculinity and Medicine: Thomas Walsingham and the Death of the Black Prince." *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2009, pp. 34-51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmedhist.2008.12.002

Gruman, Gerald J. "A History of Ideas about the Prolongation of Life: The Evolution of Prolongevity Hypotheses to 1800." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 56, no. 9, 1966, pp. 1-102. https://doi.org/10.2307/1006096

Guenée, Bernard. *La folie de Charles VI: roi bien-aimé*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2004.

Hack, Achim Thomas. *Alter, Krankheit, Tod und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter. Das Beispiel der Karolinger*, Hiersemann, 2009.

Higham, Nicholas J. "The Shaved Head that Shall Not Wear the Crown". *Royal authority in Anglo-Saxon England*, edited by Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Oxford 2013, Archaeopress, pp. 7-16.

Holmes, George. *The Good Parliament*, Clarendon Press, 1975.

Kohli, Martin. "Die Institutionalisierung des Lebenslaufs: Historische Befunde und theoretische Argumente." *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1985, pp. 1-29.

Lacey, Helen. *The Royal Pardon: Access to Mercy in Fourteenth-Century England*, York, Medieval Press, 2009.

Lecuppre, Gilles, and Emmanuelle Santinelli-Foltz. "Vieillesse et pouvoir dans l'Occident médiéval: au cœur d'une réflexion pluridisciplinaire d'actualité." *Médiévales*, vol. 82, 2022, pp. 7-30. https://journals.openedition.org/medievales/12180 (see also the other contributions of this special issue)

Lemon, Brice W., et al. "An Exploration of the Activity Theory of Aging. Activity Types and Life Satisfaction among In-Movers to a Retirement Community." *Journal of Gerontology*, vol. 27, no. 4, 1972, pp. 511-523. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronj/27.4.511

Lewis, Katherine J. *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England*, Routledge, 2013.

Lewis, Norman B. "The 'Continual Council' in the Early Years of Richard II, 1377–80." *The English Historical Review*, vol. 41, 1926, pp. 246-250. https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/XLI.CLXII.246

Lind, Levi Ryan, editor. *Gabriele Zerbi: Gerontocomia: On the Care of the Aged and Maximianus, Elegies on Old Age and Love*. American Philosophical Society, 1988.

Lindsay, Wallace M., editor. *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, vol. 1. Clarendon Press, 1911.

Lyon, Jonathan R. "The Withdrawal of Aged Noblemen into Monastic Communities. Interpreting the Sources from Twelfth-Century Germany." *Old age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Albrecht Classen, Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2007, pp. 143-169.

Martin, Geoffrey, and Chris Given-Wilson, editors. *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, vol. 6, Boydell Press, 2005.

McVaugh, Michael. "The 'Humidum Radicale' in Thirteenth-Century Medicine." *Traditio*, vol. 30, 1974, pp. 259-283. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0362152900006528

Minois, Georges. *Histoire de la vieillesse en Occident de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, Fayard, 1987.

Monnet, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, editors. *Autobiographies souveraines*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012.

Moos, Rudolf H., et al. "Older Adults' Coping with Negative Life Events: Common Processes of Managing Health, Interpersonal, and Financial/Work Stressors." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2006, pp. 39-59. https://doi.org/10.2190/ENLH-WAA2-AX8J-W

Mortimer, Ian. *The Perfect King. The Life of Edward III. Father of the English Nation*, Vintage, 2008.

Neumann, Christian A. "Introduction. Old Age before Modernity." *Old Age before Modernity. Case Studies and Methodological Perspectives, 500 BC–1700 AD*, edited by idem, Heidelberg University Publishing, 2023, pp. 1-30.

—. "Masculinity and Old Age in the Republic of Venice in the Middle Ages and Renaissance." *Old Age, Gender, Social Security in Africa and Europe*, edited by Bea Lundt and Henry Kam Kah, LIT Verlag, 2024, pp. 171-196.

—. "Old Age and Rulership. King James I of Aragon and Venetian Doge Marin(o) Falier(o)". *Old Age before Modernity. Case Studies and Methodological Perspectives, 500 BC–1700 AD*, edited

by idem, Heidelberg University Publishing, 2023, pp. 211-239. https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/catalog/book/1086/chapter/14942

—. "Perspektiven einer Gerontomediävistik." *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, vol. 98, 2018, pp. 387-405. https://doi.org/10.1515/qufiab-2018-0017

Nicoud, Marilyn. *Les régimes de santé au Moyen Âge. Naissance et diffusion d'une écriture médicale (XIIIe–XVe siècle)*, Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2007. https://books.openedition.org/efr/1448?lang=de

Ormrod, W. Mark, editor. *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, vol. 5, Boydell Press, 2005.

—. "'Fifty glorious years': Edward III and the First English Royal Jubilee." *Medieval History Ser. NS*, vol. 1, 2002, pp. 13-20.

—. "The Trials of Alice Perrers." *Speculum*, vol. 83, no. 2, 2008, pp. 366-396. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20466215

—. "Who Was Alice Perrers?" *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 219-230. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094322

—. *Edward III*, Yale University Press, 2013.

Paravicini Bagliani, Agostino (2018). "The Prolongation of Life and its Limits. Western Europe, XIIIth–XVIth c." *Longevity and Immortality. Europe – Islam – Asia*, edited by idem, Sismel, 2018, pp. 133-153.

—. "Clemente VI e il giubileo del 1350." *La Storia dei Giubilei 1300–1423*, vol. 1, BNL, 1997, pp. 270-277.

Power, D'Arcy, editor. *John of Arderne: Treatises of Fistula in Ano: Haemorrhoids and Clysters. From an Early Fifteenth Century Manuscript Translation*, Oxford University Press, 1910.

Public Record Office, editor. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edward III*, vol. 16, The Hereford Times Limited, 1916.

Raine, James, editor. *Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers*, Longman, 1873.

Riley, Henry T., editor. *Thomae Walsingham, quondam monachi S. Albani, Historia Anglicana*, vol. 1. Longman, 1864.

Schmitt, Jean-Claude. *L'invention de l'anniversaire*, Paris, Éditions Arkhê, ^{2}2017.

Shahar, Shulamith. *Growing old in the Middle Ages*, Routledge, 1997.

St John Hope, William. "On the Funeral Effigies of the Kings and Queens of England, with Special Reference to those in the Abbey Church of Westminster." *Archaeologia*, vol. 60, no. 2, 1907, pp. 517-570. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261340900005191

Taylor, John et al., editors. *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, vol. 1. Clarendon Press, 2003.

The Statutes of the Realm, vol. 1. Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1810.

Thompson, Edward M., editor. *Chronicon Angliae, ab anno Domini 1328 usque ad annum 1388*. Longman, 1874.

Tout, Thomas F. *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals, vols. 3–4,* Manchester University Press, 1928.

Van Dyk, Silke. *Soziologie des Alters*, Transcript Verlag, 2015.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *Übergangsriten*, Campus Verlag, 1999.

Wahl, Hans-Werner, and Andreas Kruse. "Lebenslaufforschung – ein altes und neues interdisziplinäres Forschungsthema." *Lebensläufe im Wandel: Entwicklung über die Lebensspanne aus Sicht verschiedener Disziplinen*, edited by idem and idem, Kohlhammer, 2014, pp. 16-36.

Warner, Kathryn. *Philippa of Hainault. Mother of the English Nation*, Amberley Publishing, 2019.

Christian Alexander Neumann is a German medievalist. He obtained the title "Privatdozent" and the venia legendi in medieval history in 2025 at the University of Heidelberg. Neumann is currently working as a research associate at the aforementioned university. He studied history and Romance philology at the University of Bochum. In 2015, he received his PhD from Heidelberg with a thesis on the relations between the Republic of Venice and the Crown of Aragon in the late Middle Ages. From 2017 to 2023 he was a postdoctoral researcher at the German Historical Institute in Rome with a project (second book) about old age and power in the Middle Ages (12th–16th centuries). For the purpose of this study, the new "gero-medievalist" perspective ("Gerontomediävistik") was developed, which combines the hitherto mostly separate academic traditions of historical medieval studies and modern gerontology. In 2026, he received the Manfred Fuchs Prize from the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities for his interdisciplinary research. He is the editor of the book *Old Age before Modernity* (2023) and has published several articles on the topic of old age in medieval times. He can be reached at christian.neumann@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de.